George Konrad:
The Modernization of the Jews

Partisan Review 4

1996

$6.00
$7.80 CAN

WILLIAM PHILLIPS A Battle over History

EDITH KURZWEIL French Anti-Semitism: 1940-1944

RICHARD WEISBERG The Trial of Léon Blum

CUSHING STROUT A New French Connection

DOROTHEA STRAUS Visiting Carlo Levi

PAUL H. ORNSTEIN Heinz Kohut's Legacy

DAPHNE PATAI The Feminist Turn Against Men

AT THE GALLERIES:
Karen Wilkin

FICTION:
Eda Kriseová
Avner Mandelman

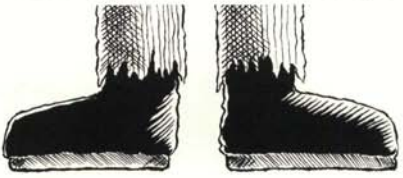
REVIEWS:
Geoffrey Hartman
Paul Hollander
Alan Mintz
Catherine A. Salmons
Vladimir Tismaneanu

POETRY:
Mark Strand, James Tate, Deborah Tall, T. Carmi (tr. Anne Atik), Stuart Dischell, J. S. Venit, C. Dale Young, Brooks Haxton

PERIODICALS DEPT
POST CAMPUS
NOV - 4 1996
LIBRARY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Strong Silent Type, Doesn't Have A Screw Loose, Avoids Fireside Dates, Level Headed.

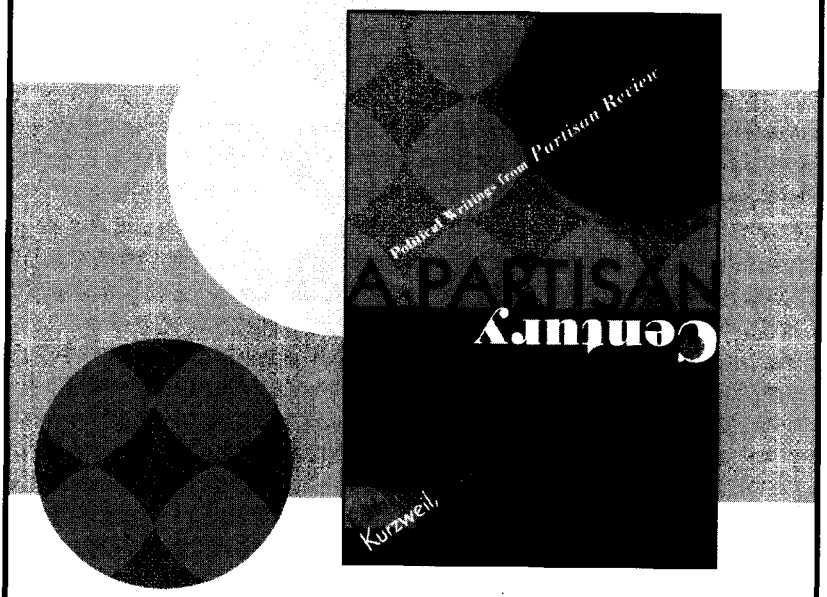


Whether you're searching for a new reading companion
or interested in Frankenstein's monstrous tale,
the skilled staff at Barnes & Noble at Boston University
can make the match.
Our extensive selection, from fiction
to business and professional reference,
with thousands of subjects in between,
will satisfy all your fancies.

Barnes & Noble
AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY
Great Companions for Great Minds

In Kenmore Square under the Citgo Sign • MBTA Green Line, Kenmore stop • (617) 267-8484
Hours Mon-Fri 9:30-9 (Street Level opens at 8am), Sat 9:30-6, Sun 12-6

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



A Partisan Century

Political Writings from Partisan Review

Edith Kurzweil, Editor

"This collection is full of plums—pieces that have become classics of political and social writing. To have them all together is wonderfully useful. I kept turning the pages and thinking: 'So there you are, nice to see you again.' I do recommend this book."
—Doris Lessing

"In its sixty-three-year history *Partisan Review* has provided a bridge between politics and culture which has ensured the decency of the former and authenticity of the latter. . . . For those who want to live history, and not just read about it second hand, I could hardly recommend a more compelling volume."
—Irving Louis Horowitz

416 pages / $19.50, paper

Columbia University Press
At bookstores.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Partisan Review

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
William Phillips

EDITOR
Edith Kurzweil

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Steven Marcus

MANAGING EDITOR
Jane Uscilka

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
Estelle Leontief
Anneliese Taylor

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Stanislaw Baranczak
Morris Dickstein
Rosanna Warren

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Leslie Epstein
Eugene Goodheart
Roger Shattuck

CONSULTANTS
John Ashbery
Frank Kermode
Barbara Rose

PUBLICATIONS AND ADVISORY BOARD
Joanna S. Rose, Chairman
Lillian Braude
Edwin Cohen
Cynthia G. Colin
Judith Ramsey Ehrlich
Stephen Feinberg
Richard Grimm
Marjorie Iseman
Harry Kahn
Mary Kaplan
Vera List
Robert H. Montgomery, Jr.
David B. Pearce, M.D.
Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.
Joan C. Schwartz
Roger L. Stevens
Dorothea Straus
Jon Westling
Edwin M. Zimmerman

Partisan Review, published quarterly in Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall by Partisan Review, Inc., is at Boston University, 236 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215. Phone: 617/353-4260. Fax: 617/353-7444. Subscriptions $22.00 a year, $40.00 for two years, $56.00 for three years; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, $28.00 a year, $56.00 for two years; institutions, $32.00 a year. For subscription inquiries, telephone 617/353-4106. All payments from foreign countries must be made by U.S. money order or checks drawn on U.S. account. Prepaid single issue $6.00. Add $1.50 for postage and handling. US ISSN 0031-2525.
Copyright © 1996 by Partisan Review, Inc.
Second class postage paid at Boston, Massachusetts and additional entries. Postmaster: Send address changes to 236 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215. Distributed in the U.S.A. by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 2020 Superior Street, Sandusky, OH 44870. Phone: 800/221-3148. Available in microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Send manuscripts (originals or clear photocopies only) to 236 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215. No manuscripts will be returned nor queries answered unless accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. No responsibility is assumed for their loss or injury.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

CONTRIBUTORS 537

COMMENT

William Phillips *Comment* **541**

ARTICLES

Edith Kurzweil *French Anti-Semitism: 1940-1944* **544**

Richard Weisberg *Léon Blum in Vichy France* **553**

George Konrad *The Modernization of the Jews* **571**

Daphne Patai *Heterophobia: The Feminist Turn Against Men* **580**

Cushing Strout *A New French Connection* **596**

Dorothea Straus *In the Medici Woods* **608**

Paul H. Ornstein *Heinz Kohut's Legacy* **614**

Karen Wilkin *At the Galleries* **628**

FICTION

Eda Kriseová *The Gates Opened* **641**

Avner Mandelman *Life in Parts* **648**

POETRY 656

Mark Strand, James Tate, Deborah Tall, T. Carmi (tr. Anne Atik), Stuart Dischell, J. S. Venit, C. Dale Young, Brooks Haxton

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

Geoffrey Hartman *Albert Speer: His Battle with the Truth*
by Gitta Sereny **672**

Paul Hollander *The Dream That Failed: Reflections on the Soviet Union*
by Walter Laqueur **681**

Vladimir Tismaneanu *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*
by Ernest Gellner **686**

Alan Mintz *The Yellow Wind*
Sleeping on a Wire
See Under: Love
Smile of the Lamb
The Book of Intimate Grammar
by David Grossman **691**

Catherine A. Salmons *i. e.*
by Claude Royet-Journoud
Boudica
by Paol Keineg
The Emperor Peacock Moth
by Cid Corman **704**

Letters **708**

Index to Volume LXIII **711**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contributors

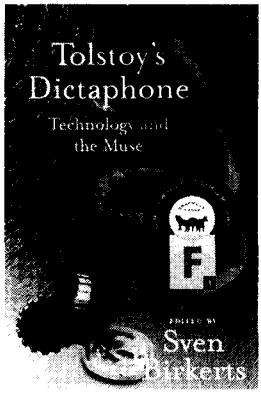
EDITH KURZWEIL's *The Age of Structuralism* (1980) and *The Freudians* (1989) have been reissued by Transaction Publishers); she is editor, most recently, of *A Partisan Century* (Columbia University Press). . . . New York University Press is publishing **RICHARD WEISBERG**'s new book, *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France,* this fall. . . . **GEORGE KONRAD**'s books include the novel, *A Feast in the Garden* and a volume of essays, *The Melancholy of Rebirth* (Harcourt Brace Co.). . . . Professor of Brazilian Literature at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, **DAPHNE PATAI** is the author (with Noretta Koertge) of *Professing Feminism: Cautionary Tales from the Strange World of Women's Studies* (Basic Books). . . . **CUSHING STROUT** is Ernest I. White Professor Emeritus of American Studies and Humane Letters at Cornell University; his books include *Making American Tradition: Vision and Revision from Ben Franklin to Alice Walker* (Rutgers University Press). . . . Moyer Bell will bring out **DOROTHEA STRAUS**'s new collection of essays, *The Paper Trail.* . . . Editor of *The Search for the Self. Selected Writings of Heinz Kohut, Volumes I-IV* (International University Press), **PAUL H. ORNSTEIN** is Professor of Psychiatry Emeritus and Co-Director of the International Center for the Study of Psychoanalytic Self-Psychology at the University of Cincinnati. . . . **KAREN WILKIN**'s monograph on Cézanne was published this summer by Abbeville Press. . . . Novelist Eda Kriseová is also the author of a biography of Vaclav Havel (Pharos Books). . . . **AVNER MANDELMAN**'s fiction was included in the 1993 volume, *Best American Short Stories* (Houghton Mifflin). . . . A United States Poet Laureate, **MARK STRAND** teaches in the writing seminars at Johns Hopkins University; his newest book of poems, *Dark Harbor,* was brought out by Alfred A. Knopf. . . . **JAMES TATE**'s last book of poems, *Worshipful Company of Fletchers* (Ecco Press) received the National Book Award. . . . *From Where We Stand: Recovering a Sense of Place,* **DEBORAH TALL**'s most recent book, is available from Alfred A. Knopf. . . . Assistant Professor of English at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, **STUART DISCHELL** is the author of two volumes of poetry, *Good Hope Road* (Viking Penguin) and *Evenings and Avenues* (Penguin). . . . **T. CARMI** (1925-1994), recipient of the Israeli Prime Minister's Award for Creative Writing, edited and translated *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse;* of his fourteen books, his poems are collected in English translation in *At the Stone of Losses, The Brass Serpent,* and *Somebody Like You.* **ANNE ATIK**'s translations of his poems have appeared in *Contemporary Literature in Translation* and *Prism International.* . . . **J. S. VENIT** lives in Brussels, Belgium. . . . **C. DALE YOUNG** is a senior medical student at the University of Florida and Poetry Consultant for *New England Review.* . . . **BROOKS HAXTON**'s recent poems are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

collected in *The Sun at Night* (Alfred A. Knopf). . . . **GEOFFREY HARTMAN** is Professor of Comparative Literature at Yale University; his newest book is *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Indiana University Press). . . . Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, **PAUL HOLLANDER** is the author of *Anti-Americanism* (Transaction Publishers) and *Political Pilgrims* (University Press of America), among other books. . . . **VLADIMIR TISMANEANU** teaches politics at the University of Maryland; his new book is the forthcoming *Fantasies of Salvation: Post-Communist Political Mythologies*. . . . Coeditor (with Anne Golumb Hoffman) of *A Book That Was Lost and Other Stories by S. Y. Agon* (Schocken Books), **ALAN MINTZ** is Professor of Modern Hebrew Literature at Brandeis University. . . . **CATHERINE A. SALMONS** is a literary critic for *Boston Magazine* and *The Boston Globe*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW FROM GRAYWOLF PRESS



Graywolf Forum 1

Tolstoy's Dictaphone:
Technology and the Muse

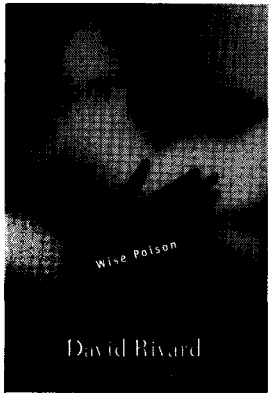
Edited by Sven Birkerts

"The hot topic of the digitally driven decline of reading makes for a timely inauguration for Graywolf's new Forum series." *Kirkus Reviews*

For this eclectic anthology, Sven Birkerts asked a number of literary writers how the technological innovations of our day are affecting our day-to-day living as well as our relationships, our imagination, our souls, and our future.

Contributors: Sven Birkerts, Harvey Blume, Daniel Mark Epstein, Jonathan Franzen, Thomas Frick, Alice Fulton, Albert Goldbarth, Carolyn Guyer, Gerald Howard, Wendy Lesser, Ralph Lombreglia, Carole Maso, Askold Melnyczuk, Robert Pinsky, Wulf Rehder, Lynne Sharon Schwartz, Tom Sleigh, Mark Slouka, Paul West

Paperback, $16.00 (1-55597-248-9)

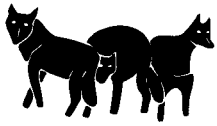


Wise Poison
Poems by David Rivard

Winner of the 1996
James Laughlin Award of
The Academy of American Poets

"I love these intense, brilliantly crafted poems. *Wise Poison* is perfectly pitched and uniquely American, a beautiful, angry, heartbreaking, celebratory, and powerful book." *Thomas Lux*

Paperback, $12.95 (1-55597-247-0)
Available November 1



Graywolf Press
2402 University Avenue, Suite 203
St. Paul, MN 55114
612-641-0077 / Fax 612-641-0036

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why not make it an intelligent gift?

Do your holiday shopping now...
give *Partisan Review*

Partisan Review

236 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215
617/353-4260

Please send a gift subscription to:

name

address

city state zip code

Sign gift card:

billing name

billing address

☐ One year at $22.00 (4 issues)

☐ Two years at $40.00

☐ Three years at $56.00

Foreign subscriptions add $6 per year.

☐ My check is enclosed

Please bill my credit card:
☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA

card number

exp. date

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Comment

Books about *Partisan Review* and the New York intellectuals continue to be published. And most of them persist in being revisionist. The latest, *The New York Intellectuals: From Vanguard to Institutions* (Manchester University Press) by Hugh Wilford, however, has a new twist. Wilford argues that *Partisan Review* and the New York intellectuals slipped from their so-called "vanguard" and "avant-garde" roles to something he calls "institutionalization."

His thesis, however, depends on loose and vague uses of concepts and terms. To prove his points, he also amalgamates disparate currents and ideas. To begin with, it is not at all clear what Wilford means by institutionalization. Sometimes he seems to mean simply getting a teaching job by individual intellectuals. Sometimes he means the magazine lost its independence through support by individual patrons. And, worst of all, the magazine was no longer on its own when it was supported by a university. His idea of freedom seems to be bankruptcy for the magazine, and poverty, unemployment, and an extreme bohemian existence for the writer and the intellectual.

Also, to dramatize the decline, Wilford posits the original position of *Partisan Review* and of its community of intellectuals and writers as being a political "vanguard" and a literary "avant-garde," which is a distortion of our early role. Our politics when we began publishing as an independent magazine were anti-Stalinist from a more-or-less left viewpoint. And our literary stand was an association with modernism, which we thought to be the major tendency of the most important writers and artists, not an espousal of some extreme experimental trend.

In addition, Wilford connects the social forces of the time with the supposed institutionalization of *Partisan Review* and the New York intellectuals. Thus, he cites as favorable conditions the growing postwar prosperity and the diminishing anti-Semitism of the academy as making it easier for writers to get jobs. He also relates the anti-Stalinism of *Partisan Review* to the anti-Communism of the government, ignoring the obvious large differences.

Wilford's most serious error is his assumption that university support meant a loss of independence for *Partisan Review*. The fact is, however, that neither Rutgers University nor Boston University ever tried to influence our editorial policies or interfere with our daily editorial activities.

But there are also misstatements and elevation of pseudo-facts and pseudo-gossip into theory. Thus Wilford states that I was an immigrant; the truth is that my parents were immigrants. And he says we invited

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Harold Rosenberg to become an editor. The fact is just the opposite: Rosenberg himself tried to become an editor. He also says we labeled Alfred Kazin a *luftmensch,* which is not true: we talked of Rosenberg as a *luftmensch.* He also uses some false information to indulge in several pages of speculation about the restriction of editorial independence by patrons. The reference is to Macdonald's attempt to take over the magazine. He had suggested that whoever could pay for the next issue would get *Partisan Review.* As I wrote in my memoir, Rahv invented a story to tell Macdonald about the wife of an army officer supporting the magazine, because the actual donor wanted to remain anonymous.

Wilford tries to balance what he considers to be our achievements and our decline. But it does not occur to him that the continuing high quality of the magazine and its literary authority may have had something to do with our values, our sense of literary direction, and our view of the culture. And he documents our presumed shortcomings by quoting a few disgruntled writers and oddballs, and a few Stalinists and fellow-travelers. Moreover, his catalogue of our failures often has nothing to do with his main charge of institutionalization.

Wilford also makes a similar accusation against *Commentary,* because of its association with the American Jewish Committee. But, so far as I know, the American Jewish Committee never brought any pressure on *Commentary,* despite the fact that it was opposed much of the time to the political views of *Commentary.* Wilford also cites Macdonald as a case of institutional decline. But he misreads Macdonald's career, for he was a maverick who flitted from one cause and idea to another.

Wilford's final chapter and ultimate example of his thesis is about the establishment of *Encounter* and the other magazines and activities funded by the CIA. But the trouble with this example for his thesis is that it involved only two or three of the New York intellectuals and that *Partisan Review* and others were opposed to it. Besides, Wilford completely ignores the ironic fact – and one that contradicts much of his thesis – that this operation was the doing of a left faction in the CIA – which was not surprising since the left had infiltrated the media and the government.

Wilford's argument to some extent depends on his assumption that individual pieces had a programmatic meaning. Thus he takes for granted that the publication of some of Kafka's stories (for the first time in America) means that Kafka's type of alienation and his views in general were those of the magazine. He doesn't seem to recognize that *Partisan Review* published Kafka because of a belief that he was one of the great modern writers. Similarly, Wilford regards the publication of Freud's famous piece on Dostoevsky and several articles on art and neurosis as signs that the magazine itself was committed to psychoanalysis. Actually, Freud's piece

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was a classic document, and the question of the relation of art to neurosis was, we thought, an important intellectual issue at the time. In addition, the articles on the subject disagreed with one other. Another mistaken assumption of Wilford's was that modernism was a movement like Surrealism or Cubism. Hence, he is able to juxtapose the movement of the Beats to modernism which, to repeat, was the great tradition of modern writing.

All this adds up to a leftist, revisionist history of *Partisan Review* and the New York intellectuals. And one has to wonder why so many of these histories have not been written by conservatives or by middle-of-the road historians. Could it be that the enterprise of recreating this story has become a weapon of put-down in the hands of what has come to be called the politically correct? In any event, each revisionist history becomes a basis for future ones.

P. S. I. Wilford says in his acknowledgments that he was in touch with me before writing the book. But I don't remember accepting his main thesis, institutionalization.

P. S. II. Readers concerned with the political history of *Partisan Review* might be interested in the forthcoming collection of pieces from the magazine, edited by Edith Kurzweil, *A Partisan Century,* just published by Columbia University Press.

Commendations John Gray has written an excellent exposition of Isaiah Berlin's ideas, *Isaiah Berlin* (Princeton University Press). He is particularly interesting in his account of Berlin's idea of negative freedom. Gray does not call attention to the fact that Berlin's liberalism is in direct contrast to the liberalism attached to central ideas and causes popular today. Gray suggests at one point that Berlin's views are essentially conservative, though, says Gray, Berlin does not cross the border and go so far as Michael Oakeshott's traditional idea of freedom.

Victor Erlich's book, *Modernism and Revolution* (Harvard University Press), is an unusually subtle description of the role of the poets and general intelligentsia in the first years of the Russian Revolution. He is exceptionally good in analyzing the ambivalences of the Russian writers who were wary of the cultural and political direction of the Revolution but, at the same time, found an affinity between their avant-gardism and the liberation rhetoric of the revolution.

W. P.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITH KURZWEIL

French Anti-Semitism: 1940-1944

Americans both celebrate and reject their history, while the French, even when repudiating some of it, glorify their past. This glorification also infected French intellectuals immediately after World War II, to the point of first blinding them and then glossing over the despicable persecution of the Jews under the Vichy regime – even while fully denouncing the Germans' (more infamous) atrocities. Inadvertently, these writers and philosophers were too preoccupied with the defeat of France to focus on the full story of collaboration and resistance, an extremely mixed and contradictory tale. In fact, there was more widespread anti-Semitism than met the eye, and there were also more individuals who helped Jews survive – ordinary people, lawyers, officials, and clergymen – all of them among the unsung heroes. Here, I am reflecting, mostly, on the reasons for the long silence by intellectuals, presenting the complexity of these times by means of three books – on Vichy laws, on how these impinged on the conditions of Jews, and on the Jewish agencies trying to save them.

* * *

Not until French historians and writers got ready to celebrate the bicentennial of their revolution, did they come to grips with the fact that they had been underplaying the subsequent terror. Even the inquiries by

---

Books discussed in this essay:
LIEUX DE MEMOIRE ET IDENTITES NATIONALES. Edited by Pim den Boer et Willem Frijhoff. Amsterdam University Press.
SISTERS IN THE RESISTANCE: HOW WOMEN FOUGHT TO FREE FRANCE 1940-1945. By Margaret Collins Weitz. John Wiley and Sons. $30.00.
THE LEFT BANK: WRITERS, ARTISTS, AND POLITICS FROM THE POPULAR FRONT TO THE COLD WAR. By Herbert Lottman. Halo Books. $14.95.
VICHY LAW AND THE HOLOCAUST IN FRANCE. By Richard Weisberg. New York University Press. $45.00.
RESCUE AS RESISTANCE: HOW JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS FOUGHT THE HOLOCAUST IN FRANCE. By Lucien Lazare. Columbia University Press. $36.00.
ETRE JUIF EN FRANCE PENDANT LA SECONDE GUERRE MONDIALE. By Renée Poznanski. Hachette Publishers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Annales School historians, who follow Fernand Braudel's recasting of history from the perspective of lowly participants rather than from that of the state and its rulers, and who have been "democratizing" the past, did not seriously challenge the celebration of the French nation. But while the reexaminations of the accounts of 1789 turned out to have been biased, and the subsequent commemorations coincided with the fall of the Berlin Wall and of the Soviet empire, some French historians began to sharply question the ideas and politics of the more recent past. They wondered about the central problems faced by French political leadership, and its policies leading up to World War II, and those that followed when the country was divided into the Occupied Zone under direct control of the Germans, and the Vichy government under the leadership of Marshal Pétain – and the postwar infatuation with the Soviet Union.

To undercut the more or less taken-for-granted accounts of this period, the historian Pierre Nora recommended that they examine especially *les lieux de mémoire,* the memories in history. For France, he states in *Lieux de mémoire et identités nationales,* "it is to see what the nation, from the revolution of 1789 to May 1968 has that is specifically French and the manner in which she imposes its rhythm and style on the life of the nation." Nora does not simply refer to personal history, or to history as viewed from a specific participant's perspective, but is asking for a more inclusive, and more accurate, understanding of France's past. He enlists both historians and intellectuals, thereby affirming, also, the French tradition of intellectuals as forerunners of revolutions, and the tight links, and affinities, between them and their political leaders.

Consequently, over the past ten years, the story of the *résistance* and the *maquis* between 1940 and 1944 has been retold, and both resisters and victims – mostly Jews and (former?) Communists – have been interviewed while they still were alive. And many Holocaust memoirs have been published. Legal records have been collected, reexamined, and evaluated within the larger context. These *lieux de mémoire* previously were ignored, as we know not only from the many eyewitnesses, but from, for instance, Malraux's *Antimémoires* (1967):

> [Brigitte Friang] was the only deportee on the train returning from Germany. At the reception center they did not believe what she told them of conditions in the camps. The paymaster ruled she could only receive her accumulated base pay "because she had been housed, clothed and fed by the Germans"! In a bank line Friang suddenly felt ill. A charitable woman supported her and arranged for her to go to the head of the line upon learning that Friang had just returned from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> deportation. A distinguished man in his fifties protested, "She should have stayed in the camp."

Margaret Collins Weitz's interviews with *Sisters in the Resistance* (1995), which focuses on the participation of women, is packed with such examples. (Bruno Bettelheim, among others, wrote of similar experiences in the United States.)

In any event, France's dual heritage of historical presence and intellectual leadership in the political realm was interrupted only by the Germans. Indeed, already before the enemy was totally defeated, French thinkers, led by Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Merleau-Ponty, were writing of their individual experiences. They not only denounced collaborators, but stressed their own feats in the *Résistance* rather than their relative passivity and life of ease early on. For example, de Beauvoir reports a great deal about food shortages and totally abandons her Jewish student, Bianca Lamblin, whom first she and then Sartre had seduced; and Malraux and his love, Josette Clotis, entertain lavishly in Nice while Malraux's wife Clara refused to divorce him in order not to lose his "protection" against deportation for herself and their daughter, Florence.

I am not arguing that the postwar intellectual elite, who helped purge the most zealous collaborators among them, such as Drieux La Rochelle and Brasillach, was in any way implicated in assisting the Germans, either while Marshal Pétain presided over the Vichy government (and collaborated with them), or after they occupied the entire country. But, as Herbert Lottman, in *The Left Bank,* (1982) correctly stated:

> If one were able to tabulate the memoirs of those years, one might conclude that nearly everyone resisted the Germans . . . . [and] that "everybody collaborated." . . . [This] line is disseminated notably in the recollections of those who associated with the German occupying forces . . . [and] who attempted to exonerate themselves by offering a record of all the others who were similarly associated.

Actually, authors had to have some contact with the Germans to receive the necessary paper and permission to publish, and meeting with "friendly" occupiers sometimes served to obtain information for the resistance. All in all, for most of the French the lines were fluid. But intellectuals alone had the prestige and the ability to reflect upon, examine and elaborate on their experiences during the German rule in plays, fiction and in political articles.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Led by Sartre, they started *Les Temps modernes* as soon as the war was over. Sartre's brilliant essay, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1946), which primarily indicts the anti-Semite rather than the Jew as the perpetrator of the Holocaust, not only seemed to be the definitive judgement of the recent past, but firmly reestablished the importance and presence of all (left-leaning) French thinkers in history. Moreover, many of their discussions would revolve around the engagement (and political influence) of intellectuals, which, all along, they had located in their writing.

In addition, France's defeat during that war, its dire economic conditions, and the impending Cold War, were bound to be of overwhelming concern. In the struggle not to repeat their former errors of appeasement and yet to avoid another war, the French primarily wanted to find a "third way," between America and the Soviet Union. To that end, French intellectuals, once again, were enlisted to call the tune. The ensuing disputes amongst themselves were about avoiding a tilt to de Gaulle (who had his own anti-Americanism) and America on the right, and to the Soviet Union on the left – and to steer clear from both. Here, I am not primarily concerned with the fact that until the late 1960s Sartre and his pro-Soviet friends ended up calling the shots, and to nearly disenfranchise and silence such opponents as Raymond Aron and Arthur Koestler. I am maintaining only that the many polemics about theories and practices, once again, established the importance of intellectuals as political pacesetters.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that most French historians waited until the 1980s, until the trial of the infamous Klaus Barbie, to seriously inquire into exactly what happened between 1940 and 1944. And because the enormous inflow of Jews into France after 1933, especially their competition for work and housing, had caused much anti-immigrant feeling, as well as gradual legislation, and similar sentiments now were surfacing, interest in the period was being sparked and revived. The many studies about French responses to German policies, all seem to confirm that that was when latent anti-Semitism increasingly manifested itself. However, no single inquiry can account for the various contradictory forces and counterforces operating at the same time, acting and interactiung with old and new institutions, and affecting every individual. Altogether, scholars have established that even French citizens who until the mid-1930s neither had shared nor agreed with racist premises eventually began to see the Jews as "other," as an alien presence, although only a few would have wanted them killed.

The excerpt from Richard Weisberg's *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France*, in this issue of *Partisan Review*, exemplifies and reflects these conflicts once more.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

* * *

Weisberg, an American constitutional lawyer, in this excellent book, chronicles and documents, in detail, how French lawyers and courts functioned under Vichy rule. While debating legal precedent and procedures, they allowed a few prejudiced colleagues to push through legislation that helped, and at times anticipated, the wishes of the German forces of occupation – first allowing for the persecution of foreign-born Jews and then of French ones. He stresses that the Vichy government instituted the first of its laws defining Jews and legalizing their internment in special camps already on October 3 and October 4, 1940, and did so without much discussion or German pressure; from then on decisions would include notions of *race* in addition to religion and would designate as Jews anyone having two or more Jewish grandparents. Thus, French lawyers would adjudicate endlessly on who was or was not Jewish. (French Jews whose roots went back for at least five generations for a while received special treatment.) Among Jewish lawyers, and law students, a previously established *numerus clausus* of three percent was retained, and strict distinctions among French and foreign-born Jews were being drawn. Already on June 25, 1940, a week after France's surrender, it was decreed:

> Those lawyers may also be maintained who, on the request of a given Bar association [conseil de l'ordre], after consent given by the Court of Appeal acting collectively, and on the proposal of the commissioner general on Jewish questions, [are] authorized by the Minister of Justice in recognition of the eminent quality of their professional service.

To qualify, a lawyer had to declare his Jewish ancestry which meant that he might be accepting the racial designation he was entitled to refuse, thereby relinquishing the chance to fight legislation depriving him of all rights of citizenship, property and freedom of movement. The law was unclear also for those who had Christian spouses, and for mixed-heritage individuals who never thought of themselves as Jewish but became implicated if married to Jews. Thus the brother of a designated Jew might be decreed Christian because he could produce baptismal and other clerical records. The proceedings were so technical, legalistic and long-winded that new laws often outlawed eventual decisions. But documentary evidence soon lost all relevance, when more and more forgeries were being uncovered. And while the Vichy lawyers endlessly were debating legal points without seriously questioning the legitimacy of the laws themselves under the French constitution, a number of left-leaning, Jewish lawyers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

already were being arrested in Paris, and deported to Auschwitz – in September 1941.

The intellectuals must have known of these lawyers' fates, but did not officially comment. That same summer, reports Lottman, "Sartre and Beauvoir [had] slipped across the line dividing the German and Vichy controlled zones for a vacation. . . . [In Grasse] Sartre told [Gide] that he was 'a travelling salesman of ideas – subversive and even dangerous ideas.'" In Nice, he spoke to Malraux of his plans for resistance to the occupation, but did not convince him of their feasibility. Clearly, French writers shared the concerns of their Jewish friends – who were in hiding, about to be deported, or had managed to flee abroad – but not their immediate danger. They certainly were aware of Blum's trial in Riom, and of the anti-Jewish laws. Did the overall fate of Jewish lawyers not catch their immediate attention, or did Malraux, who had been revolted by communist duplicity in Spain, convince Sartre that all resistance was useless until the Allied forces and the Free French would invade? (Still, Malraux arranged, for instance, for Manès Sperber's escape to Switzerland). After Sartre and Beauvoir returned to Paris to join the majority of French intellectuals, they may well have known that the German High Command did not approve of legal debates that slowed down the pace of deportations and aryanization in the Occupied Zone, and the seizing of Jewish assets, and yet felt helpless in the face of prejudicial laws.

Weisberg ends up demonstrating that the new laws applied a form of French Catholic reasoning (and a touch of xenophobia), many French also eschewed. These laws both accentuated the traditonally uneasy relationship of France's secular government to the clergy, and enabled the Vichy racial laws to infiltrate a culture that otherwise was antipathetic to them. However, it also roused French Protestants to hide and rescue Jews. Lewis Coser's *lieux de mémoire* during his stay in Montauban, illustrates this point: In 1941, when a few leftist, and hungry, Spanish refugees were caught stealing fruit from a stand, they asked their German-Jewish (and endangered) friends to help defend them. Coser approached a local lawyer, telling him that they had very little money. "Monsieur Coser," responded this lawyer, "we have been fighting the Catholic state for three hundred years, and I will gladly defend your friends free of charge." This anecdote demonstrates, as do the thousands that by now have been collected, that both French resistance and collaboration took many forms.

* * *

Lucien Lazare, in *Rescue as Resistance* (1996), underlines the role of the churches in the opposition. In the summer of 1942, he found, aware-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ness of the true physical danger of Jews, led "all Jewish organizations, without distinction, [to] revise their analyses and actions," and to prevail upon a number of Catholic and Protestant clergy to help find hiding places. By then, non-Jewish intellectuals either were on the Riviera or in Paris, while their Jewish counterparts were widely dispersed. But few intellectuals had contact with the clergy, and thus did not know much about their clandestine activities.

Renée Poznanski's *Être juif en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (*To Be Jewish in France During the Second World War*) documents the effects of German and Vichy laws on the Jews who found themselves in a fragmented, constantly changing, and ever more dangerous, hostile universe. From hundreds of individuals' testimonies and scholarly studies about their experiences, from offical French records and personal archives located around the world, she reconstructs the ambiance and intricate connections attributable to the Germans, to the (often idiosyncratic) control of local Vichy authorities, clandestine activities, and the Jewish organizations that sprang up in response to them. Lazare describes the detailed background, and the gradual transformation, of the many religious and Zionist groups that were being mobilized in response to the occupation; their cooperation with complex relief efforts by Protestant, American and Swiss agencies, and their various, and changing links to the resistance.

Poznanski and Lazare start out by emphasizing that the 300,000 to 330,000 Jews who in 1940 found themselves in France did not constitute a community. The families of about 90,000 among them had been there since the beginning of the French state: they were fully integrated, often were married to Christians, and may or may not have been converted. Others were established members of the bourgeoisie, belonged to professional associations, and frequently had come to Paris from eastern provinces such as Alsace-Lorraine. About two percent were devout, religious Jews. About 100,000 who had fled from Germany and the countries it had taken over had found refuge in France; nearly 40,000 foreign Jews, in 1939, enlisted in the French army to fight Hitler; most of the others were interned at the outbreak of the war. In the wake of the German army, the majority among them, along with many Frenchmen and French Jews, had fled to southern France. Poznanski recounts the measurements initially taken against all Jews in the occupied zone, and focuses on their fate; Lazare on how their organizations regrouped in response to ever more desperate crises.

On my trip from Brussels to Toulouse at that time, in one of the three cattle cars I shared with another ninety-nine children, I witnessed many of the despairing scenes she describes. We considered ourselves

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

privileged, first to have transportation at all, and then to be assigned to an empty orphanage in a tiny village. In August 1940, while trying to obtain the necessary papers to join my parents in America, in Toulouse, I first became aware of the many people who were going hungry and sleeping in the streets, and of the legal restrictions already in place in the "free" zone. My memories corroborate Poznanski's (and Weisberg's) reports that Vichy laws were interpreted disparately, depending upon biases of local officials. I was extraordinarily lucky that the Prefect of Toulouse, who seemed to be a friend of André Weill – a Strasbourg lawyer at the Jewish agency I was sent to by a secretary at the Spanish consulate – issued me an exit visa at a moment when he wasn't supposed to do so. Both Poznanski and Weisberg ascertain that prefects then were very powerful; and that Jews who eventually survived almost invariably had done so in Montauban, in the Dordogne, in the area around Lyon, in the eastern areas that were occupied by the Italians, and in those populated by Huguenots. (Lewis Coser says that information about chances of surviving in hiding, and about benign officials, travelled like wildfire, and led Jews to move around in line with rumors.) Lazare reports on the cynical use of Jewish philanthropic bodies, and of foreign rescue committees, by the Germans, who, in cooperation with the Vichy government, imposed their edicts by means of the Jewish councils, and later on of Jewish police.

By March 1942, Jews began being rounded up systematically for deportation; populist anti-Semitism increasingly had been whipped up; and clever collaborators succeeded in eliminating more and more of the potential hiding places. Now, the number of Jews being transported (from both zones) to such concentration camps as Gurs, Saint-Cyprien and Drancy – as waystations to Auschwitz – dramatically increased. So did surveillance, abetted not only by the visibility of the yellow star, but by the increasingly restrictive laws Weisberg has analyzed.

Beginning in January 1943, for instance, hotel registrations had to include religion, and the date of "declaration of Jewish religion." Jewish agencies now attempted to save the children of the deported, by finding ways to get them to Switzerland and to induce French families to take them in – an enormously complicated task given that such activities, themselves, were endangering the lives of individuals assisting in these undertakings. In addition, Jews had to find work to support themselves. Inevitably, the peril of their existence led all the able bodied among them to go underground, to procure false papers, to engage in clandestine activites, and to join active combat in the *maquis*. Poznanski estimates that about forty percent of its members were Jews, and Communists. Lazare notes that forged documents were the best means of survival. (The writer Annie Kriegel, in her memoir, states that she joined the *maquis* because

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

she was Jewish and there became convinced that communism alone could make for a better world after the war.)

Lazare narrates the ins and outs, and the dangers involved in saving children, and the problems in circumventing a succession of German orders to round them up. He concludes that Jewish organizations saved between 8,000 and 10,000 of them. Poznanski observes that transports of Jews left Paris as late as August 1944; that between March and August 1944 many Jews were assassinated in the Dordogne, Limoge and the Ain regions; and that by then the expected demise of Germany led formerly indifferent officials to pronounce that they had saved this and that Jew, this and that Gaullist. At the time of the final assault, concludes Lazar, the *Armée juive* (Jewish army), as well as all the other resistance networks, fought alongside their French brethren from all walks of life. Of course, the remaining Jews had to defend themselves to the end, and had to insert Jewish resistance into the *Résistance,* in order to prepare for restoring their legal rights after the end of the war. They were supported by the communists, who asserted that the Jews had fought legitimately and had been integrated in the combat of the French people in the liberation of their country; that they had done their duty, and that "their blood was shed on French soil, mixing every day with that of the most generous sons of the French people." By then, of course, the Allied Forces were on the march, and every left-leaning writer had actively joined the battle.

* * *

Given the intellectuals' earlier inaction and lack of involvement, and the shocking poverty and ravages the country faced immediately after the war, should we be surprised that the French recalled primarily their Johnny-come-lately underground activities, and pushed their more thoughtless and occasionally shameful ones under the rug. And even though the intellectuals did not fully come to terms with their behavior during the occupation, the many *lieux de mémoires* now are being tapped not only to gainsay such anti-Semites as Faurrisson who argue that the Holocaust did not take place, but to counteract and explain this peculiarly mixed up, and particularly French, political past – without being too harsh on the French nation and the French state, and, possibly, to recall that anti-immigrant feelings easily may tumble beyond what is deemed acceptable. Still, a bit of chauvinism in times of defeat is needed as well, to retain a touch of pride in country, which, many have come to believe, are requisite ingredients for the citizens of any viable democracy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RICHARD WEISBERG

Léon Blum in Vichy France

Léon Blum is one of twentieth-century France's most fascinating figures. A leading light in literary circles around the time of Proust and Valéry, Blum was also an accomplished lawyer and eventually one of the Third Republic's foremost leaders. After World War II, Blum returned from imprisonment in Germany, again to become a key policymaker. He died a venerated man – indeed a uniquely admired politician and writer, whose lifelong Socialist ideals were upheld in such a way that few who differed with him on principle could manage to resent his politics.

In just a single period during his exemplary life did France itself (as opposed to his most extreme political opponents) come to detest and ostracize Léon Blum. Having abided him, sometimes grudgingly, having recognized his moral force in affairs ranging from the persecution of Dreyfus (which he passionately opposed) to the establishment of the forty-hour workweek (which he earnestly managed to bring about), and from the occupation of the Ruhr (opposed by Blum) to the firm alliance with beleaguered Poland (hailed by Blum in the tense atmosphere of prewar Paris), Vichy turned on him with legalistic ferocity in 1940 and attempted to silence him forever. The means to this end was a criminal indictment virtually tailor-made for Blum and several other leaders of the Third Republic. The charge was responsibility for the French defeat and betrayal of the duties of his office as premier and vice permier during the prewar period.

The complainant, the authority that spoke for France as it moved to excise from the French polity Blum and everything he stood for, was the government of Vichy France. From its arrest of Blum in September 1940, to its formal indictment of him some thirteen years later, during the political trial against him in the town of Riom that began on 19 February 1942, until its transfer of Blum in March 1943 from the French prison at Bourassol to the concentration camp Buchenwald, Vichy's treatment of Blum spans the years of its greatest power and – as I here argue – typifies the régime's adoption of legalized racism on French soil.

In the year of that Riom trial, 1942, a novella appeared from the pen of a young French writer, himself a member of the Resistance. In the

---

Editor's Note: This essay is excerpted from *Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France* by Richard Weisberg © 1996. New York University Press.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

story, French law defines and banishes from its midst a man whose values it cannot tolerate. That classic tale, *L'Etranger*, does not explicitly mention the political and legal horrors of Vichy. Only much later, this same storyteller – Albert Camus – would explicitly associate the malaise that was Vichy with the eloquent professionalism of a lawyer. If, in *The Stranger*, the heterodox Meursault is convicted of being different, in Camus's last story, *La Chute* (1956), the tables are turned and we are asked to sit in judgement of the successful lawyer Jean-Baptiste Clamence, he who in the depths of Vichy's evil rationalizes himself into non-resistance. Like hundreds of French magistrates, lawyers, bureaucrats, and law professors during Vichy, Clamence uses his gifts of reason and eloquence to toleratee what he was trained as a lawyer to oppose. Blum – the flesh and blood stranger – is the quintessential victim of Vichy law. And Clamence – the fictional lawyer – represents many lawyers during Vichy who participated articulately in the régime's racial policies, participated because they lacked the professional and moral capacity to say no.

Riom epitomizes the struggle for the French soul that went on in Vichy and that, in a sense, has been going on ever since. It also stands as a comparative constitutional model from which lawyers generally need to draw wisdom. For Riom came to pass under a government that thought of itself as controlled by constitutional principles very similar to those in systems like the English and American. Due process talk permeates the investigation and trial, but process, in a fairer sense, was due neither Léon Blum nor the Jews on French soil whose fate he sometimes seems to embody. Nor did Blum or his co-religionists count any more under the guaranties (still nominally present because still so theoretically dear to these descendants of 1789) of "equal protection."

The paradox of Riom as a challenge to the French rhetorical allegiance to the constitutional heritage is furthered when we cast light upon the proponent of the government's proceedings against Blum, Joseph Barthélemy. Universally admired and even revered as a leading prewar scholar of French administrative and constitutional law, Berthélemy was Vichy's justice minister, and as such played the key role of antagonist to Blum's embattled defense. No mere martinet and surely no zealot, Barthélemy was considered a voice of reason and even liberality. He could not be confused with the occasional virulent bigot attracted to the government. But he did enjoy power, and he was fiercely loyal to the aging but charismatic Pétain. Contemporaneous with the Riom proceedings, he had signed the comprehensive religious statute of June 2, 1941, broader in its terms and in its application than the Nazi models.

Joseph Barthélemy micromanaged the proceedings against Blum and the other prewar leaders. He jots down the words "The Jew Blum" in his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

notebook as he listens to the defense, observing, "No Jew would be allowed to speak up against Hitler the way Blum does here against Pétain." Later, upset that the defense has managed to score legal and even public relations victories (despite his carefully wrought censorship program) against the prosecutors, Barthélemy suspends the trial without releasing the defendants. He goes on to underwrite the infamous "Special section" courts that summarily try Communists, resistance fighters, and Jewish hostages; Barthélemy dies of tongue cancer awaiting his own trial after the Liberation. And some thirty-five years later, with the publication of his extensive memoirs, he posthumously provokes the debate about French legal values in the face of crisis and moral debasement.

As Barthélemy and the defense lawyers sparred, the notion of French constitutional law itself became a player at Riom. Contemporaneous with the trial, an elaborate committee established by Vichy under Barthélemy's leadership was actually drafting a new constitution that would cite all the traditional safeguards of equal protection and due process while it also considered Barthélemy's suggestion that "race" be introduced to deprive unwanted outsiders of those very rights. Meanwhile, a tiny minority of courageous French lawyers, including the Riom defense team, loudly invoked the still-existing rights established in 1789, rights which had been reiterated in the Constitution of 1875 that remained nominally in force to protect their clients until Vichy promulgated its own chartering document.

Constitutional arguments abound at Riom, in the presence not only of government ministers but even of occasional German authorities, most of them down from occupied Paris and visiting the "free zone" controlled by Vichy. The fact that Blum himself, as well as his lawyers and those retained by the others, could raise a specific legalistic attack on the *ex post facto* laws under which they had been indicted, on the breach of separation of powers that had permitted Pétain to declare their guilt before the trial began, on the impediments to the production of evidence necessary to the defense but found in the Occupied Zone, and on violations of the basic rights of man confirmed by one hundred-fifty years of French constitutional law – this fact indicates that no Vichy lawyer was forced to collaborate in the new system. For, if the imprisoned and indicted Blum and his fellow defendants could protest with such eloquence, surely their compatriots, influential Vichy lawyers, had all their rhetorical options available to them. Defense counsel at Riom, who challenged on behalf of their clients the very *bona fides* of Pétain's government, were treated with respect throughout the proceedings.

Yet no Vichy lawyer or group ever directly protested against the régime's religious laws and extensive persecution of Jews on French soil.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This is yet another of Riom's paradoxes: it reveals that lawyers could without significant risk protest fiercely against oppressive Vichy laws; it casts into a tragic light the profession's pervasive willingness to accept and work with the language of racial exclusion.

So, Riom exposed much about Vichy law more generally. It is a tale of a proud legal system, self-consciously autonomous from the Germans, developing over four years its own peculiar blend of rationalized racism in a constitutional context. It is the story of lawyers, most of them trained to believe in equality and due process, precipitously – in a flash, as it were – using their skills to argue and apply anti-Semitic laws that exceeded in their scope of definition what the Germans demanded or indeed promulgated in the Third Reich. It is the story of selected and rare moments of courage within the legal profession. And, above all, it is the story of Vichy's pervasive "Barthélemisme," the ability of decent people to use their professional skills narrowly and perversely, to myopically avoid the central issues of their legal workday, and to employ low levels of generalization to produce high levels of grotesque and aberrational French legal rhetoric.

Much has been written about the political and historical dimensions of Riom. Blum, a Jew, was the quintessential (but not the only) target of Vichy persecution. His Jewishness was an important part of the state's resentment of him, and an elaborate scheme was concocted by the régime to dramatize his expulsion. The self-styled "revolution" that Vichy was creating had as a significant aim the elimination of certain specific nefarious influences that it felt had debased France and brought about its spiritual degradation and military defeat. Reacting against the French Revolution's motto, "Liberté, égalité, fraternité!," Vichy adopted the desultory triad, "Travail, famille, patrie." Truer still perhaps to the spirit of the regime was its call for the elimination of everything that was wrong with prewar France: its leaders, its morals, and its racial minorities. From the beginning – long before any German Diktat – Vichy promulgated a series of anti-Jewish laws, signalling that its program was resentful, reactive, and negative. Whatever the strengths or weaknesses of its claim of distinctness from Nazi models, this violent resentment of perceived enemies links Vichy's policies to the worst aspects of Hitler's Germany.

While not always speaking explicitly about Jews, the entire framework of Vichy law embodied this principle of exclusion. Thus Marshal Pétain, the aging World War I hero to whom the defeated French granted full powers to head their new government in Vichy, reflecting on the process of constitutional revision that Vichy set for itself, insists upon the need to condemn in order to redefine:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> The institutions that have brought us moral dissipation, economic ruin, and military defeat can only be irremediably condemned. France, with a sure instinct, attributes to them the misery of the Nation. It does not wish to see them again. It will not see them again.

What place, given the project of ostracism, would human rights have in the new constitutional scheme? Pétain goes on:

> The State, however, emphasizes its respect for the human personality, first achievement of Christian civilization.

Barthélemy would insist that the new constitution include:

> The grouping of rights that constitute the notion of the human personality . . . The family, the source of preservation and development of the race. The State exists as the politico-juridical expression of the Nation . . . The State considers itself subordinate to the superior rules of morality and of law . . . In this way, the State differentiates itself from totalitarian States.

But how was a constitution that would speak of "the family as the source of preservation and development of the race" going to "differentiate itself from the totalitarian states" of Europe? Barthélemy's own draft constitution would go on to include the following explicitly racial Article IV:

> The French community requires from its members an absolute allegiance. It does not accept into its breast as a constitutive element a race that conducts itself as a distinct community that resists assimilation.

In the thinking of Pétain and his legalistic servants, there arises a consistent interweaving of the restoration of "French" or "Christian" civilization with the elimination of certain tendencies, and these tendencies are political, moral, and racial all at the same time. Rights that were to be safeguarded – like ownership of property, freedom from arbitrary detention, or from prosecution for *ex post facto* crimes – were vouchsafed only to the protected, morally sound, majority. Article 28 of the Barthélemy draft constitution guaranteed to "All Frenchmen the right to move

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about and to establish a residence of a domicile in any lawful place," and the article assured, "No one can be arrested or detained unless under law and by the prescribed formalities." But Articles 28 and 29, drafted well after the Vichy Jewish laws had authorized the stripping of Jewish property, the relegation of Jewish movement to certain areas, and the establishment of arbitrary arrest and detention for merely being a Jew, were apparently not applicable to all Frenchmen. As Article 29 put it in conclusion: "But whoever is summoned or seized by force of law must obey instantly."

Barthélemy, this liberal academician and life-long fervent Catholic who as late as 1938 adopted public positions of anti-fascism and egalitarianism, speaks this way of an essential feature of Pétain's legislative scheme:

> The government of the National Revolution sees it as indispensable to rid the French community as quickly as possible of certain elements who have insinuated themselves in high leadership positions in the State, in industry, and in the Bank.

Vichy was able to demonize Léon Blum, because he embodied in one visible entity the three traits it most detested. He was a socialist prewar leader; he urged France to adopt the lax values that had led to defeat and demoralization; and he was a Jew. The longtime anti-Semite Xavier Vallat, whose parliamentary attack on Blum in 1936 had been silenced by the Chamber's newly elected president, Herriot, now had no vocal enemies; he was to find his own way to power under Vichy. From his base of operations at the central Vichy administrative agency on racial questions – the "Commissariat général aux questions juives," or CGQJ – Vallat watched the still-polite world of French law deal with his detested Blum.

Indeed, in Riom, where everything was done by law and where statist anti-Semitism remained largely covert, the "strangeness" to France that Vallat associated with Blum in 1936 was rearticulated. Blum was on trial not just for poor prewar armament preparations; a prosecution witness, General Langlois, formulated the deeper structure of the case against Blum: "It's too bad for France that the leaders did not believe in war . . .There were some who didn't even think French." Blum asked aloud if the witness were referring to him, to which Langlois responded that he did not "deal in personalities." Blum said:

> There are many ways to deal in personalities. I would think that if the witness was referring to me, if he was thinking of me in using such a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> weighty and insulting expression, that he would express his thought in a categorical manner.

Langlois's resuscitation of Vallat's thought occurred in open court on April 1, 1942. Like the tip of the iceberg, it evoked more than it showed.

Near Vichy, at the Chateau of Chazeron, a prison had been set up to accommodate a series of illustrious political prisoners, all of whom had been arrested without charge by a Vichy law of September 3, 1940, legitimizing administrative detention. Léon Blum took his place there on September 15th, thus gaining the dubious distinction of being among the first Jews to be arrested under Vichy statutory law. There would eventually be tens of thousands of such cases, none (perhaps unfortunately) as well publicized. Blum was joined the following April 25th by fellow socialists such as Auriol, Dormoy, Grumbach, and Moch – three-quarters of the influx were Jews. His case was special though, as was that brought against his illustrious co-defendant, Édouard Daladier. These prominent Third Republic leaders were to endure a process that lasted from their imprisonment in the fall of 1940 through their indictments a year later and their trial in February of 1942. Both fates would involve continuing imprisonment, both in France and in Germany. They never ceased battling the charges against them. But Blum's case was the more personalized, the more allegorized, and finally, the more representative of the Vichy years.

Blum at Chazeron was kept in a kind of Kafka-esque limbo as to the nature of the charges against him until, on October 18th, 1940, these were revealed. Although he would contest eloquently every substantive accusation, his lawyer-like attention was drawn first to the question of the jurisdiction of the court charged with his case. Under the terms of the fifth of the new "actes constitutionnels," passed on July 30th, 1940, Vichy had created a new court, and it was this "Cour suprême" that indicted Blum and others for "Treason against his duties in actions that led from a state of peace to a state of war." Specifically, the régime saw dereliction in duty when Blum, as prime minister, nationalized the war industry, introduced the forty-hour workweek, and failed to suppress strikes. The charge laid the beginning of French demoralization and unpreparedness at Blum's feet.

Blum, a distinguished lawyer both in France's highest administrative court (the Conseil d'État) and the private bar, was not long to answer the methods used to arrest him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Since I have been confronted with the first procedural move against me, I want to make a preliminary statement. The acts that have been held against me are of a political nature. Under the Constitution of 1875, the body having jurisdiction over crimes committed by ministers in the exercise of their functions was the Senate, assembled as a High Court of Justice. An act of the Head of State has eliminated the High Court and created a Cour suprême. This act was itself undertaken pursuant to a delegation of power granted by the National Assembly in a resolution of 10 July [1940]. I must declare, therefore, that I do not recognize the validity of that law, which I believe was infected by a substantial absence of consent.

Blum's theory was that not only the new court, but also the régime that had created it, had no constitutional validity. From this point until the suspension of the trial, he and others at the defense table maintained that the "constitutional acts" under the legislation of July 10, 1940 which created Vichy were all invalid. Blum's foundational arguments against the validity of the prosecution provoked almost immediate internal debate at Vichy. Barthélemy agonized over the strategy, which called into question Vichy's leader, who was otherwise achieving near-mythic dimensions as France's savior in a time of defeat and desperation. Over the course of the entire Riom process, this man of law never resolved the constitutional attack in his own mind; as late as February 14, 1942, the constitutional lawyer in him still pondered Blum's foundational attack on the court's legitimacy.

Publicly, however, Vichy at Riom gave not an inch on the question of its own validity, and the matter never gained enough momentum outside the defense team to make a difference. As a matter of constitutional law, the government prevailed in its view that the National Assembly's July 10th grant of full powers was an authentic "going-out-of-business" transfer to the new government, and that each successive constitutional act – including the establishment of the Cour suprême – had complete legitimacy as a matter of positive law. The National Assembly recognized, on this view, the need for authoritarian leadership in the hands of the hero of Verdun.

Having survived constitutional attack from the outside, however, the Cour suprême ironically faced its greatest challenge from the head of state himself. Pétain was frustrated by the pace of his new court's proceedings. He wanted quicker disposition of these political pariahs. A year after the arrest of the defendants, and still many months before the preliminary inquiry into their case was completed, Pétain made a declaration of the Riom defendants' guilt. At the same time, he shocked even his closest ad-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

visors by attempting to substitute for the Cour supréme the jurisdiction of a hand-picked "Conseil de justice politique." This council of political justice – more an executive advisory board than a court – would remedy the delays of the Cour supréme and hasten the verdict and punishment against Vichy's foremost enemies.

Pétain's second intervention against the Riom defendants had the appearance of legality, indeed of constitutional legitimacy. Constitutional Act 7 permitted Pétain – personally – to investigate and punish all government functionaries or ministers who "betrayed their duties." No matter that the council was completely unchecked by the ordinary procedures of French criminal investigations, impermeable even to the influence of the Marshal's faithful Barthélemy.

If authoritarian government had been mandated by the French people in their representative's final act, Pétain forced the further argument that he alone could administer justice as well as promulgate legislation. A memorandum rationalizing the council, and Vichy's other "exceptional courts" – there were to be nine altogether – invokes the memory of Saint Louis (a provocative but hardly unique conjuration) to justify what otherwise seemed like a gross breach of separation of powers:

> A chief-of-state jurisdiction? This seems to many a surprising innovation. . . . And yet in all cultures the power and the duty of rendering justice have long been among the most prized prerogatives of the leader. When societies have begun to move from private vengeance to penal justice, the leader has been the first judge. . . . Who had not heard of Saint Louis, presiding under an oaktree in Vincennes . . . ? It is a return to this old judicial tradition interrupted for a century and a half, that is consecrated by [the new courts].

Although only the defendants and their counsel had protested against the Cour suprême and the legitimacy of the régime as a whole, Pétain's insistence on the council proved too much for others as well. Having tacitly accepted by that summer and fall of 1941 many other fundamental violations of French legal tradition, some of France's most distinguished lawyers now decided to speak up. Jacques Charpentier, *bâtonnier* of the Bar Association of the City of Paris, may have been willing to engage in a self-described "honeymoon" with Vichy (accepting without batting an eyelash its anti-Jewish statutes, which quickly involved some of his colleagues in the pillaging of "Aryanized" property); he may eventually have tolerated the sight of the Star of David on the robes of surviving Jewish litigators in the Palais de Justice; he may have grudgingly given Vichy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

authorities the names of court personnel who might fall prey to the racial *numerus clausus*. At Riom, however, Charpentier would not quietly accede to the blatant denial of due process embodied in Act 7 and its consequent executive council of justice. On 28 August 1941, in his official capacity as head of France's largest grouping of private lawyers, Charpentier wrote directly to Pétain, as follows:

> M. le Maréchal: In a recent speech, you announced your intention to judge on your own those "responsible for our disasters," by using Constitutional Act #7. Soon after that text was published, you did me the honor of receiving me, and you assured me that you did not intend to apply such a procedure against those indicted before the court at Riom . . . Now it seems from the newspapers that their trial will occur before you, and it is also difficult to guess whether the Cour suprême is to be dissolved or if new investigations will follow the old.
>
> Whatever may be the case, I believe it to be my duty as Bâtonnier respectfully to call your attention to the extraordinary nature of such a measure, which I believe to be without precedent in the history of our country. All great political figures who come to mind . . . were judged by courts – the Duc d'Enghien himself was tried before a court martial.
>
> The Bar Association is both by nature and secular tradition the logical defender of accused people. I would betray the confidence of those who have chosen me their leader if I remained silent before a measure that must be judged by History, but that surely at present constitutes a violation of the defendants' rights.

Jacques Charpentier, like Joseph Barthélemy, was another basically decent lawyer who found a way to work with Vichy, but who picked his spots to protest vigorously when he felt that his own, or his constituency's, vital interests had been compromised. Neither man would find his way clear to attack at the heart the wide-ranging Vichy legalistic sickness that was anti-Semitism. But, thanks largely to their efforts, the Council of Political Justice did not crush the Cour suprême.

Charpentier in Paris was not alone in his anxiety over the proposed shift from the court to the council. Joseph Barthélemy claims to have heard the news for the first time, during the intermission of a performance of Boris Godunov at the Grand Casino in Vichy. Pétain was making a speech over the radio, amplified for all in attendance to hear. Although respected by the Marshal, and close to him on almost all legal decisions, Barthélemy appeared shocked by the announcement. He decided to work immediately to have the Cour suprême restored to full jurisdictional

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

power over the Riom defendants. He took upon himself the task of explaining his master's reasoning to the offended Cour suprême and to the people of France. Although the council went on formally to condemn Blum, Daldier, and the co-defendant Gamelin to immediate imprisonment in the maximum security prison at Portalet (far less comfortable than the one at Bourassol), the mediation of leading lawyers brought jurisdiction over their fates back to the Cour suprême for a trial on the merits. At the behest of his trusted minister, Pétain's intermeddling ceased, but his presence as a kind of mythic savior whose sacred nature the defendants insisted on attacking still dominated the Riom courthouse.

The jugular attack by the defendants against the régime itself had failed for lack of broad-scale support outside Riom, but because the council of political justice did offend many influential lawyers, that body at least had been suppressed. Now continued the long period preceding the trial, the traditional French "preliminary investigation." In this process, little familiar and less comparable to Anglo-American criminal law, a detailed psychological portrait is drawn of the suspect. Novelists like Camus revel in depicting preliminary investigations, and Blum's – taking place as Camus wrote *L'Etranger* – would have been grist for his esthetic mill.

During the seventeen months before Blum came to trial, the theme of his "strangeness" to the values of Vichy was composed as the preliminary investigation's dominant *leitmotif*. This allegorical element was quietly at work during the very months in which the jurisdictional battle was being fought more openly. For although the Marshal's pretrial pronouncement of guilt and insistence on his own tribunal drew attention and disapprobation from most Vichy lawyers, the Cour suprême and its agents proceeded without interruption or publicity in a manner those same lawyers would only applaud as typical of French criminal law.

The preliminary investigation into the guilt of Blum and the other Riom defendants – during which some six hundred-fifty witnesses would be heard – was designed both to uncover the facts and to cloak Blum in the colors of Vichy's direst enemies. The pretrial phase spanned the calendar year 1941, peaking perhaps in June, the very month in which the definitive Vichy religious statute was signed by Barthélemy and offered to a France that was awash in regulatory anti-Semitism.

The indictment levied against Léon Blum contained, of course, no explicit reference to his Jewishness. The issue arose during the trial, and it was much in the mind of Barthélemy and many onlookers. No individual case better exemplifies Vichy's program: the confounding of political, spiritual, and religious elements in a reactive response at least to the poli-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tics of the 1930s and arguably to the idealism of the previous one hundred-fifty years.

And, in another sense, no prosecution so compellingly complements, by its mixture of law and storytelling, procedural forms and mythic allusions, the story being written by Camus as he contemporaneously lived through the Vichy experience. As in *L'Etranger*, the French state conducts an investigation that has as much to do with the *character* of the defendant as with the crime he allegedly committed. And in Riom as well as in the Algeria of the novella, a preliminary investigation sets the tone (often more subtly than does the prosecution at the public trial itself); the allegory of good and evil emerges early, and the defendant finds himself answering charges that are as much metaphysical as they are based on historical "fact." In a manner quite distinct from Anglo-American criminal procedures, the French pretrial inquiry provides the ideal narrative structure for this admixture of law and myth. Just as Camus depicts the *juge d'instruction* (examining magistrate, or preliminary inquisitor) finding Mersault's moral weakness and making it central to his legal case, so the Riom *juge* seeks to associate Léon Blum with the "sickness" of Republican weakness and spiritual debasement.

Camus in 1942 gives us a process frighteningly close to the contemporary reality: French law capitalizes on the surrounding political and cultural atmosphere to allegorize its case against the Riom defendants. Léon Blum, like Mersault, is punished for being "other." But where the fictional character is painted as an amoralist, the real defendant is stamped with a foreign morality. Its name is "Jewishness" and its trademark is the Talmud. During the unfolding of the preliminary investigation, much was happening in both French zones that colored the strategy of Blum's pretrial inquisitors. Vallat, the exogenous prewar parliamentarian whose racism was then silenced, now typified the mythic background from which prosecutors and other Vichy lawyers could find sustenance even as their egalitarian blood cells continued to fight for recognition in the corrupted organism. In 1937, Darquier de Pellepoix, eventually to be Vallat's successor at the CGQJ, had included the following series of "quotations" in his publication, *L'Antijuif:*

> "It's a commandment for every Jew to try to wipe out everything that concerns the Christian church and those that serve it." Talmud
>
> "To bolster their trusts, their guilds, the Jews have decided to ruin trade. Small businessmen are inept, they constitute a social anachronism and it would be good if they disappeared." Léon Blum

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Non-Jews have been created to serve Jews, night and day." Talmud

"Only Jews are people; other nations are a species of animal." Talmud

Vichy legal theorists, too – with more art, perhaps – interwove religious anti-Semitism and social policy. In treatises on the new religious laws by such authorities as the lawyers Henri Baudry and Joannes Ambre, legalized sanctions against the Jews are discussed in the context of citing neutrally Vallat's 1936 libel against Blum on the floor of the National Assembly. Legal scholar André Broc contemporaneously condones the laws against Jews as correctly symbolizing the *essential religious differences* between Christian and Jew, epitomized by the latter's alleged devotion to the Talmud. If the citations to the Talmud and to other Jewish texts and "rules" are almost always erroneous or totally fabricated, the Talmud nonetheless symbolizes the ineffable "otherness" that legitimizes – nay necessitates – the imposition of the status of "other" through law.

Furthermore, a loose "interpretation" of the Talmud itself was justified, since flexibility in the reading of texts is itself a mark of the elevated Christian law, compared, in this view, to the literalness of the Jewish religion. For the Jews, every act is dictated by the letter of the law, whereas French law has risen to an elevated level of spiritualistic generalization.

Vichy law's twisted use of the Talmud rationalized the need for a special law to regulate a group that had defined itself as legally special and legitimized persecution of that group through loose, amorphous, and often incoherent readings of history, religion, and sacred texts. In *L'Etranger*, Camus brilliantly captures this "spiritualization" of the criminal law; Meursault is tried for failing to show the proper sentiments at his mother's funeral or for starting a sexual affair on that same day. Analogously, Blum is tried for "poisoning" French morale, and for the twin infecting agencies, Socialism and Judaism. Although hardly an observant Jew, and although more celebrated for his knowledge of French letters than for his Talmudic wisdom, Blum would continue to be associated with a foreign strain of thinking. The preliminary examination into the Riom charges against him, along with the occasional revelatory moment at the public trial, indicate that the "making strange" of Léon Blum was at the heart of the matter. As Blum himself alluded to his preliminary inquisitors' strategy:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> I have poisoned the country by what is called my weakness and complaisance, my weakness and complaisance in face of subversive plots, and primarily, I imagine, towards the Communist Party.

And he proceeds:

> I am, then, trying to find out what is the tangible, concrete, content of this indictment, of which nobody could say that it is not present in all the charges brought against me. And when I endeavor to discover, to examine, what is the meaning of these charges of weakness and complaisance by which the soul of this nation is alleged to have been corrupted, I return always in the last analysis to this everlasting occupation of the factories about which I have said so much.

Blum the lawyer – Blum the Talmudist? – is seeking to find in the charges against him something specific. Perhaps it was his government's relationship with the Communists; perhaps it was his unwillingness to bring violent state action to bear on the strikers who occupied the factories during 1936. Or, perhaps too poignant for the always idealistic "Juif d'Etat" to surmise out loud, perhaps it is the Jewish value system, the quest for justice on this earth, that once had seemed harmonious with France but that to the new régime was anathema. Ironically, Blum's very insistence on finding the "substance" of the seemingly amorphous charges against him reenforced the prosecution's allegorical treatment of his personality. Who but a Jew, who but a Talmudist, would insist on literal details at a time of such moral urgency for the French?

Like Mersault's pretrial inquisitor, too, Blum's eventually adopted a kind of unsolicited, easygoing familiarity with the defendant. To Blum's essential assertion that his policies were born of compromise, discussion, and political necessity (as well as of idealism and the mandate Blum felt he had received from the people), the rejoinder was this:

> During one of the visits he paid me at [Blum's first prison, the Chateau of] Chazeron, the Examining Magistrate said to me with flattering, certainly, but also intimidating suavity, "Why, when a man like you is in the government, everyone knows he is the real Head!"

Who can forget the scene when, during an equally lengthy preliminary investigation into moral guilt, Meursault's inquisitor taps him on the shoulder in a most friendly way and labels him "M. Antichrist," thus es-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tablishing humorously what turns into the deadly serious justification for a capital sentence. So Blum's inquisitor posits him as the supreme leader – the unquestioned source – of what the prosecution now submits was a poisoned politics and a venomous morality that must be ruthlessly eliminated from the French bloodstream.

Joseph Barthélemy, perhaps as much as any other individual, sought to translate the Marshal's antipathy to these Riom prisoners into an official verdict. A lawyer to his roots, he surely deserves some of the credit for the eventual openness with which the Cour suprême engaged the defendant's arguments; but of considerably greater moment is the fact that he tolerated along the way so many detours from established French priniciples. The *ex post facto* nature of both the charges and the jurisdictional innovations, the censorship and spying on the defendant's communications that were largely his creation, the closed nature of some of the proceedings – these and other breaches of due process that would have shocked the law professor of 1937 or 1938 were endorsed by the reincarnated Minister of Justice of 1941 and 1942.

Barthélemy's memoirs reveal his inner doubts about the *substantive* nature, too, of the Riom charges, particularly those against Blum, "who was not in the government at the time hostilities commenced." Yet again, he found a way to ignore the plea of his best inner self by employing halfway measures that did nothing to change the grim reality of Vichy's departure from French legal norms. In this case, he substituted forms for substance and was content to organize a trial at which the *trappings of tolerance* replaced real fairness. His characterization of the defense's view of the trial borders on self-deception:

> Although the defendants are always called "Monsieur" . . . the judges sometimes must interrupt their speeches . . . The defendants and their counsel have expressed their confidence in the independence of the judges and have confirmed that this is a judicial – and not a political – process.

Eventually, however, Blum's appeal to republican virtues won considerable public support, as dispatches emerged from Riom despite Barthélemy's quite illiberal attempts to censor the proceedings and to dictate the form of their public dissemination. Although the major constitutional arguments Blum raised – often articulated in court by the lawyer Le Troquer – did not succeed, Pétain's technical defeat liberated Blum to take on the merits of the case, and he did so with gusto. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

substantive arguments and their sheer legalistic force so contrasts with Vichy's "spiritualized" persecution that they deserve summary here. Blum, eager to go to the merits of the case against him, once his jurisdictional and constitutional arguments had lost, was clearly masterful: his government had reduced tensions among striking workers, not created or increased them; the forty-hour workweek, which helped to end the strikes, had no real effect on military production; the nationalization of some industries was to prevent profiteering at a time of general economic difficulty; his policies were those mandated by the people, through the overwhelming victory they had given him. Blum's remarks exuded the republican *credo*, which incontrovertibly justified even policies that may have gone on to fail; his passion for the Republic still found receptive ears at Riom and beyond.

As Blum juxtaposed the substantive legal issues to an impeachable belief in French Republican traditions, Barthélemy raged inwardly. Indeed, it would be only a mild exaggeration to find in Barthélemy's approach to Blum at the late stages of Riom no small measure of "ressentiment," of severely reactive negativity against this man whom Pétain saw as the archetypal enemy. The contemporaneous jottings evoke a vulgar anti-Semitism. But the latter description somehow seems less fair to the inner Barthélemy than the notion that he found himself increasingly powerless to bring this particular Jew to heel.

Perhaps as the trial wore on, Barthélemy started to think about the early days with Blum, and this would only have aggravated his resentment. Their relationship began when Blum was with the Conseil d'Etat in the years prior to 1919, when both men entered the National Assembly together. Barthélemy describes their relations as cordial until 1924, when Blum's party vanquished Barthélemy's; from that point, in the Justice Minister's words, Blum "stopped acknowledging my presence when we crossed paths in the halls." Barthélemy's understandable spite before these memories from the 1920s might have been exacerbated by the "dignity" and "biblical paternalism" with which he always associated Blum and his family. Together, the characterizations evoke a more polite, traditional anti-Semitic language than we saw in the jottings, one that defines the Jew by his arrogance, his otherness, and his tribal loyalty.

For Barthélemy, the last straw was the explicit conjuration of Pétain's name by the defendants, together with the implication that the Marshal himself – on the logic of the indictments – also deserved to be in the dock. Blum and his lawyers made much of the use of the phrase "ultérieurement à 1936" in the charges against the defendants, a phrase that limited the court's investigations to the post-1936 period. But it was obvious to all that his tactic was designed to prevent a full inquiry into

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marshal Pétain's own place, during the early to mid-1930s when he played an active role in France's prewar policies.

No one could prevent Blum, even on the terms of the indictment, however, from answering a question relating to a 1937 meeting of the Permanent Committee for National Defense as follows:

> [Citing the minutes of the meeting:] "Upon a remark by Marshal Pétain, M. Léon Blum asked the following question: 'What will happen if Germany and Italy do not agree to take part in the work of the [Disarmament] Commission?' He replied by indicating that, in that case, our interests lie in pushing on with the work as much as possible . . . The meeting ended with unanimous agreement."

For Barthélemy, this implication of his sacred leader's complicity in pacifism and unpreparedness for war must have been "the most unkindest cut of all." Despite self-described "cordial and frequent meetings with the lawyers, Barthélemy found himself hearing his revered leader's name cleverly inserted almost daily into the defense argument. Would no one play the game any more by the "correct" rules? Would this man, the nemesis to Vichy, be permitted to sully the hero who had come to save the soul of a defeated nation?

Barthélemy's "sole concern" lay not in safeguarding the rights of the defendants but in protecting the aura of the Marshal. Fittingly, it was he who would eventually end the trial prior to a verdict, for "the spiritual values and eternal certainties upon which the Marshal intends to base the renewal of the country have been flouted." His leader's charismatic goodness was to be safeguarded from the morally poisonous strategies of Blum. The national interest in protecting the régime – and no German Diktat – led Barthélemy to recommend to Pétain that the trial be suspended, with the Cour suprême retaining its jurisdiction and with the defendants remaining in prison. On April 11th, 1942, Barthélemy and Pétain signed an order to those effects, and on April 14th, their decision was announced to the public.

Blum, arrested and tried as the very symbol of what Vichy law intended to expunge from its midst, had survived and even prevailed. Riom thus not only clarified in its choice of Blum an entire constitutional approach, it also permitted French lawyers and others to perceive that there was an opening for resistance, resistance through law as well as violence. Yet the courage of Blum, his fellow defendants, and their lawyers rarely was emulated by the French legal establishment.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Although the Cour suprême never rendered a verdict, Blum and his co-defendants were still "guilty" according to the judgement of Pétain's other "court," the Council of Political Justice. Temporarily elated by the suspension of the public trial, Blum had to celebrate his seventieth birthday, a month later, still behind bars. Before turning seventy-one, he would be handed over by the French to the Germans. From April 1943, his prison would be in the valley of the shadow of death – at Buchenwald. Upon the liberation of Europe, Blum was able to return to France, where, despite the events just recounted, he willingly assumed again a leadership position for France.

The First Annual Irving Howe Memorial Lecture

"POLITICS OUT OF RELIGION: THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE"

Michael Walzer
The Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, NJ

Monday, November 18, 1996
6 p.m.

Harold M. Proshansky Auditorium
33 West 42 Street
The Graduate Center--CUNY

Free and open to the public.

For further information call
(212) 642-2684.

Sponsored by the Center for the Humanities, CUNY Graduate School, with a generous gift from Mr. Max Palevsky.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GEORGE KONRAD

The Modernization of the Jews

The modernization of the Jews – their transformation into a true citizenry whose awareness extended far beyond their local communities – took place parallel to a similar development among Christians. The effects of this change were redoubled among Jews, who had to overcome not only their own isolation, but that of the Christians as well. From the standpoint of the Orthodox, or that of the hostile environment, this assimilation was quite rapid. By the same token, the rise of Christian citizens among Poles, Czechs, and Magyars was also a fast-paced one, involving the adoption of foreign fashions and manners. The citizen characteristically looks out upon the world stage, selecting its bounties where he finds them. The Central European way of life was created by Christian and Jewish citizens together, as they discovered an international model with a strong regional coloring.

In the course of their transformation into citizens, the Jews lost Hebrew, Yiddish, and Ladino and finally, through German cruelty, also lost their common language of literary German. Culturally, they assimilated in large degree to the peoples in whose territories and states they lived. Even while dreaming, the Hungarian Jews speak Hungarian, the Romanian Jews Romanian, the Czech Jews Czech. Cultural isolation has never been an issue among them.

The coexistence of ethnic minorities with the majorities around them has always been a symbiotic one. From the standpoint of modernization, the Jewish presence has had a fructifying effect. The same energy that operated within the surrounding peoples worked in them also, embodied in the selfsame cry: Away with our own feudalism! Away with the ghetto, locked even from inside! Away with segregation, with the isolation born of outside orders and internal definitions! The individual's emancipation from religious communities and institutions was part of Europeans' transformation into citizens. Whether the religious organization be hierarchical in nature or part of the community itself, it had a firm hold on the people of the Feudal Age. The Jewish Enlightenment was driven by a desire to break free, to establish contact with all other inhabitants of the globe, to become true neighbors among neighbors.

Editor's Note: "The Modernization of the Jews" is copyright © 1996 by George Konrad.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But neither "assimilation" nor "dissimilation" is the precise term for what is happening today within Central European Jewry. The more reflective among its members take both – or perhaps all – of their ethnic affinities seriously, unwilling to deny one aspect of their identity at the expense of another. They have no desire to answer the question of whether they are Jewish Hungarians or Hungarian Jews. Most of the Jews whom I know consider a Jew to be one who knows and declares himself to be one. Non-Jews rarely assert that they are Jews.

For my part, I have never encountered either Jewry or "Magyardom," only people of one sort or another. When being killed, Jews are all alike. Otherwise, given the chance to live, they differ. In cattle-cars or barracks, they begin to resemble one another, but before and after that, in civil dress, they are various. A reductive view that seeks out commonalities is the first step towards the machinery of the *Endlösung*.

For centuries the Jews, wherever they have lived, have been guests granted certain rights, because they would rather see themselves as guests than choose complete assimilation. It is impossible to repeat the failed models for assimilation: neither a Christian-National assimilation nor a Communist-Socialist one has proved to be a viable strategy. The Jews cannot liberate themselves from the gift, or the burden, of having been born Jewish.

They live like those around them, but are interested in the fact that they are Jews. In any case they will be informed in numerous ways that they are different. Not a week passes that they are not reminded of this by something in the newspaper or a piece of graffiti. Should they read a brief story about the destruction and defacement of gravestones, it sticks in their heads even after all the other news has faded. One evening they hope to find a peaceful home in their place of residence, and the next they are seized by doubt, while on the third evening they think that things have been going on this way for millennia, and probably will continue for a good while yet.

It does not hurt to repeat that the Jewish Question is really the question of Christian or Moslem society: To what extent do *they* tolerate *themselves*? If they accept their own manifold nature, then they will also accept the Jews. If they wish to repress themselves, then they also vent their rage on the Jews. All signs suggest that the societies of Central Europe have no desire to oppress themselves on the eve of the third millennium, hence they can live with the Jews as well.

If democracy consolidates in Central Europe, then the Jews can coexist free from cares with all the others. I assume, for example, that the bold middle class in Hungary will view nationhood as a matter of rights and cultures rather than one of religion and race, and regard the Hungar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ian-speaking Jews of Hungarian citizenship as a part of the Hungarian nation. Public opinion will not be stunned to see Judaism be just as transnational as any of the world's great religions, like the great and small churches of the Christian faith.

There is a vibrant Jewish community in Hungary, with schools where the children can be Jews without effort, where the lighting of the Hanukkah candles is already quite natural. There are still Jews willing to preserve the world of memory, to nurture tradition and run the temple, and there is a demand for classes to be held in the synagogue after services. There are Jewish groups in Hungary, and schools, and journals and publishers, hence publications of Jewish interest, and there are special segments on television explaining the significance of Jewish holidays. Judaism as a faith or as an established historical religion enjoys a certain regard and the rights that accompany it. A great proportion of Jews are not religious, and an equally great number are, but in their own way. A more modest percentage attends synagogue, while a yet smaller number adhere to the religious proscriptions concerning daily life.

The Hungarian Jews who live in Israel visit Hungary regularly, and Hungarian Christians travel to Israel ever more frequently. They are no longer confronting a phantom, but rather people of flesh and blood who love and protect their homeland as they themselves do. Hungary's relationship with Israel is strengthening; I suppose that conditions for it to do so are always improving, if only because there are many Jews in both countries who communicate with one another in Hungarian. There is some chance that the collaboration between the two nations gives Hungarian Jewry, which is primarily Budapest Jewry, a new reason to flourish. This community's behavior and fate have a paradigmatic significance, because, among other reasons, it is Central Europe's largest Jewish community. The development of Hungarian-Israeli relations bodes well, as do all types of exchange that are so important within them, including two-way tourism, visits to cemeteries in Hungary, the joys of her restaurants, and the passion with which Hungarian-speaking Israelis go to the theater. It is to be expected that the Israelis, who are to a large extent of Eastern European origin, should be interested in the seats of their heritage. It is becoming ever more natural for Christian Hungarians to visit the land of the Bible, and if for example, some of them happen to be orchard farmers, it makes perfect sense for them to see how their Israeli counterparts work. It is impossible for sensitive people not to be deeply moved by the Holy Land. Ahh! So this is the land the Jews built for themselves! Considering what they started from, this is more than remarkable. But even more importantly, it is a country that can be understood on a human level, making the Jews, too, understandable on a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

human level. Through this daily contact, anti-Semitic mythologies are exposed as illusions that say as much truth about the Jews as Dracula films do about Transylvania.

If the present situation in Central Europe holds, if the democratic rule of law that exists today persists – imperfect and faltering, yet nonetheless predictable – then more alternatives will open up for the Jews who remain there expectantly. Jews have not created political organizations as a national or ethnic minority and do not speak out for collective rights. They have renounced the positive discrimination that other national minorities demand. They have no wish to isolate or segregate themselves, and demand no autonomy beyond the freedom of assembly, including religious assembly, that is every citizen's right. Beyond their demand for democratic rights, the Jews as a group have no distinctive political interests. Naturally there are conservative, liberal, and socialist Jews. Tending in so many directions, they have no common political desire other than for the rights of democratic freedom. As long as there is a liberal democracy, there will be Jewish organizations as well as some Jews who have nothing to do with them. To belong or not to belong to some organization is not a critical question of existence.

It is obvious that Jews have an interest in liberal democracy and in a constitutional rule of law, in being citizens of equal rank with others, and that all antidemocratic nationalisms run counter to their interests. Wherever a frantic majority restricts any minority, things go badly for the Jews. The rights of the Jews are on firm ground wherever people are not killed simply for political reasons, robbed as part of official policy, and withdrawn from circulation by the authorities. The Jews have an interest in democracy at every level, local and national, transnational and transcontinental throughout the globe, wherever they happen to be, and this not only in political relations but, at least as much, in personal ties as well. In the modern age a life that follows the Ten Commandments is most feasible in a liberal democracy. If a Jew strives to weaken a democracy, there is some doubt as to his capacity for judgement.

The twentieth century has been the age of the ever-widening influence of the Jewish Diaspora, but even as victims in the death camps Jews had a role of extraordinary relevance for the entire world. After Auschwitz, it makes no difference what the Jews say about their Judaism; they must deal with it, and neither they nor their descendants will ever be able to forget it. The subjugation and helplessness of Jews in World War II teach that the Jews must obtain some power and show that they have it. This refers not just to Israeli Jews who have formed a nation, but to Jews of the Diaspora as well. They must be firm believers in basic human rights anywhere on earth, since this is the touchstone to their survival. To this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

extent they are in solidarity with any people, any minority that asserts its fundamental human rights in nonviolent fashion.

Most Jewish achievements derive their determining energy from the fermentation of a paradoxical identity. Jews have advanced far into the territory of individualism. So what is common to all Jews? The fact that they declare themselves to be Jews. Whatever a Jew says is Jewish speech, and whatever a Jew writes is, similarly, Jewish literature. Whatever language the Jews speak, they recognize one another after only a few words, and their relationship with one another is more infused with feeling, more conspiratorial, quicker to anger. They may meet with non-Jews, have contact with them, yet do not entirely blend in with them. They do not proselytize; most do not themselves convert. They honor God by remaining Jews. They have assumed a special role in the world's communications, in news services, in business, in intellectual dialogue, in transforming the earth and its creatures into a world.

In order for us to regard Judaism as our own, we must see it as an unfinished process that develops as we ourselves do. It extends beyond just the words of its priests; everyone who calls himself a Jew is entitled to redefine that word. Christianity received the Jewish tradition through Jesus; Jesus carries Judaism with himself into the entire Christian world, which formed Judeo-Christian mythology in its own image. One sees on a church fresco the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Saints. Even if they wanted to, Christians and Jews could not separate their most important images and holy writings. Through Christianity and Islam, the Jews gave an important period of their ancient history to much of humankind. They see their Diaspora as both a blow and a divine beacon. It is a consequence of monotheism that the world is unified, and that people are capable of understanding one another. They even see their ability to be anywhere as a fulfilment of their responsibilities.

There are Jews almost everywhere in the world; no other people is so dispersed. Their special quality is to have been so greatly destroyed and yet have survived. The continuity of their persecution and their long survival throughout the interim periods are historical facts. Judaism's role as a people of the world in a symbolic sphere is also an historical fact. It is the only people whose home is the entire world, but this is also the source of its vulnerability. This is the Jewish paradox: a world-people in nation-states.

Jews who have become integrated into national cultures have learned the manifold types of intimacy found there. The Jews consider themselves a world-people, but at the same time they conform to the nation in whose midst they live. On the one hand there is universality; on the other, this strange people that has a religion. Many historical peoples

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would like to have their own religion, imagining that it would be a good thing to have one. Many Jews, though, are unconvinced that it is so good. They would be happy with a somewhat less conspicuous role. But no matter how he tries, the Jew cannot conceal his identity; the roads to denial have all been tried. The Jewish people is one of the oldest to find that it must constantly remake itself.

The people that has chosen to fill the role of preacher has spoken out for the concept of one God, one humanity, while always preserving its own separateness. The role of the preacher-people is to establish intellectual relationships with all the peoples of the world, bringing religions and world-views into common dialogue. With Babel, God created variety, to make it difficult for us to understand one another, and to compel us to work towards the understanding of that which is different. Without difference, the common is meaningless. It is also a divine instruction that we bring the world together, understand one another, further peace among peoples, and maintain respect among acquaintances.

Has time run out for the optimistic universalism that focuses on a relaxing of differences, on rapprochement, on association and integration? Does the neoromanticism of community segregation lead to a mood propitious to intellectual meetings of the various religions and nations, to some undefined aspect of the encounter pointed to by the Jews' one God? For after all He is really just the God of one people, though He did not remain so; modern Jews, through their works, have become the bearers of a universal mode of thinking that transcends even themselves. It has fallen to the Jews to live within this unresolvable duality between global and national self-definition. This is their social role, this ambivalence torn between the universal challenge and the loneliness of the minority. The Jew invariably transcends what is given; he requires a God, a comprehensive framework, a clarifying distance. He feels he must regard our earthly situation through the optics of the Everlasting One.

The intellectual transcends what can be depicted. While it is forbidden to represent the One God, nonetheless the language of the Bible is nothing but pictures. Because of the Hebrew writing system, a text is open to multiple interpretations. This spurs debate, and suggests that things may be regarded from many angles, and consequently that there is no institutionally empowered determiner of the truth. Prophets and Wise Men have a special role in the Jewish religion. There are not many of them, but there are in any case more than one, making it possible to choose from their wisdom the way we choose from the classics depending on our age and mood. The exalted writer – which all of the prophets were - is bestowed a religious status. The role of the autonomous interpreter becomes sanctified, making possible the tremendous significance of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the individual within the Jewish religion, where the great masters, through their thinking, are exceptionally influential. The creations of secular Jews have become a part of Jewish culture, of which religious Judaism is but a segment. There is no place for strict distinctions between religious and secular meditation in the realm of spiritual truth. Literature by its very nature ignores this distinction. The fallible teacher has his role, using his perspicacity to detach himself from his surroundings and sense the will of the Lord. We are justified to include religious literature in the literary tradition, as well as to state that the books of Jews from Spinoza to Kafka and beyond are a part of Jewish tradition, and of Judaism itself.

For secular Jews, Jewish literature does not end with the Torah and the Talmud. Even in the last millennium and a half there have been at least some Jewish authors a few of whose pages could stand alongside the holy books, even if their numbers are not great. One must expect the divine anarchism that dwells within men – and it is indeed divine, since God laughs at our creations. One must expect the denial of faith that Jews are prone to, and their propensity for the prophetic, as well as their role as rebellious angels – all of this gives us the courage to say that, wherever any of us happens to be at a given moment, that place is the beginning, the place of embarkation, the zero-point. Metaphysically transported to the null-point of knowledge by our mortality and frailty, it does not enter our minds to begin teaching and proclaiming. But the true destination of transcendence is not the distant beyond, the next world, the afterlife, but rather the family and a continuing fruitfulness within our living bodies. It is for this reason that children are of greater value than anything else. The parent exalts the child above himself, thereby outliving the trials of the present day, and his personal death, through his descendants. He upholds, violates, then restores the Ten Commandments, unable to turn his eyes from the tables.

Judaism revolves around three striking poles: the religious community, Israel, and mundane individualism. These seem contradictory, but in fact are interdependent and reinforce one another. The grandest wisdom is required to hold them together in worthy fashion, even within the conscience and life of one person. One could say that each of the three demands a separate person. The first path to this goal is the one of orthodoxy, of the preservation of tradition – not only in books, but also in a living practice that accepts isolation and the idea of the family as a religious institution, the desire for the incomparable permanence of customs in the face of the demands of changing times – in other words, an absolute completeness with which it is hard to square the philosophies of the other two poles. Another path is the one of national modernization in a sovereign Jewish nation-state that is capable of defending itself, capable of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

preventing any more mass murder of Jews, a state where the dignity of united action is the answer to the resigned suffering of the Shoah's helpless victims. The construction of the state of Israel fills people with such a national consciousness. The third path is that of the secular individualism of the Jews living in the Diaspora. This does not mean an abandonment of Jewish consciousness and Jewish affinities, or the conversion to other religions, or nationalist or Communist assimilation, but rather, for example, those economic, scientific and artistic achievements through which Jews in various countries and various language communities have enriched the universal culture.

It is a plain fact that, for three thousand years, a part of Jewry had no choice but to live in the Diaspora. Globalization marches on, the world becomes more interconnected, and the Jews continue to function as the avant-garde in this process, a fact which unsettles the surrounding majority. Forces for localism will always be angry at the Jews for being translocal; for them, the national border is not the edge of existence, or at least they do not see what is over the border as hostile and foreign, since the area within the border is itself not overly accommodating to them. This world-people turns up everywhere, using its mind, taking the initiative, and writing books in conspicuous numbers. We need to look at both sides of our outlook on the world: the localism and the universalism, the belonging as well as the absence thereof, because it is this very tension that gives force to Jewish irony. Our thoughts negotiate easily between our rooms and the solar system. We can look at the world from anywhere we happen to be, and the place where we are we can examine from a worldly distance, finding it fairly easy to move from the intimacy of the family to the loneliness of humankind. It is plausible for us as Jews to be comparativists, to see one people within another. Like a fermenting agent, the Jews are in constant motion compared to all others, and are on the road even at home, like Old Uncle Kohn in the joke, who doesn't feel comfortable either in the old country or in his new land. The Jews are not exactly masters of the art of being at peace in a place. Partly as a result of discrimination, those Jews who are secular humanists tend to give up local prejudices and replace them not with those of other places, but with something more comprehensive and more universal than the national.

It is essential for Jews to understand this multipolarity that resides within them. Some may even be fond of it or, to put it somewhat simply, like to see it as romantic and mysterious. In any case we can dispense with the illusion that one of the poles is the "true" one that encompasses and replaces the other two. It is only natural that Jews make some compromise choice among these three possibilities in their personal and family

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lives, and it is interesting who chooses (and renounces) what: Is it prayer? Country? The world as a whole? Whoever cannot understand this multipolarity and experience it on at least some level finds his Judaism a burden, a complicated condition. A people's strategy is the sum of the life strategies of the individuals it comprises. The Diaspora, like universalism and the Jewish participation therein, is a resource.

This all necessarily has its negative, distorted side: the anti-Semitic myth of the international Jewish conspiracy for world dominance, which we can hear virtually anywhere. Suspicious primitiveness regards a pluralistic identity as demonic and dangerous, of uncertain nature and provenance. A Jew has a hard time working free of his ambivalence and multivalence, being more at home in the territory of paradox and irony. Because of this, he inspires the resentment of the local community. This challenge posed by the Jews has not disappeared with the establishment of the State of Israel, since the existence of this state in the Arab-Islamic world of the Middle East is no less a challenge than the Jewish presence in the Euro-American Christian one. The very existence of the Jews, and their conception of God, constitute the challenge, and nothing will change this. Why isn't he Christian, why not a Moslem; indeed, why is the Jew a Jew? There is no rational answer to these questions. Why not? Just because! Things will no doubt stay this way for a few more millennia.

I repeat that it is no easy task to sympathize with the contradictory interdependencies of Judaism's three authentic paths. If there is no Jewish consciousness, then we cannot be capable of self-irony and creative and wise compromises. The basis of Jewish consciousness is not Auschwitz, but rather this threefold enterprise, this strategic triad of tradition, nation, and world. All of this can be found in the Holy Book: the priestly, the national, and the prophetic-universal. Fate has granted Jews the art of changing perspectives, which has allowed them to become the antennae of human experience. They have also received the knowledge that it is essential to protect themselves in all of their forms. Universalism cannot be renounced; it is the radical consequence of monotheism. It is no simple task to become part of universal humanity and still remain Jewish. Divine command requires the perpetuation of tradition as well as the preparation for the future. We have before us roughly as much time as remains for mankind on this earth to work on the realization of this paradox. In accepting the multiplicity of our existence, we may help humanity to discover itself.

Translated from the Hungarian by James Andrew Tucker

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DAPHNE PATAI

Heterophobia: The Feminist Turn Against Men

Something very strange happened toward the end of the twentieth century. Women turned against men. Lives of human complexity, filled with both affection and antagonism, began to be perceived as intolerable, perhaps despicable. Heterosexual intercourse was reclassified as "rape" and women's power to "consent" dismissed as powerlessness to resist patriarchal impositions. Heterosexual women had to be wary of revealing conflicts in their personal lives, since any such admission seemed to carry the expectation that they should turn away from men and set out on their own. Even Simone de Beauvoir, formerly seen as a feminist heroine, a fighter for women's rights, became suspect because of her attachment to Jean-Paul Sartre. Intellectual companionship and lifelong love and friendship were now recast as craven subservience, while feminist critics scurried to deal with the discovery that their former idol had failed to lead the exemplary life they prescribed for her.

Heterosexuality has gone from being the norm to being on the defensive in the face of the phenomenon I call *heterophobia* – fear of difference, fear of the "other" – a term I use to refer specifically to the feminist turn against men and against heterosexuality. Of course, these attitudes are not held by all women, not even, perhaps, by many women, though certainly they are found among many feminist women. Nor is heterophobia solely the creation of lesbians, since they, vastly outnumbered by heterosexual women, could never have imposed such an agenda had it not been acceptable to heterosexual feminists as well. But if homophobia is still a problem for society at large, heterophobia is now feminism's own predictable reversal of that problem.

Heterophobia is by no means an entirely new phenomenon, though never has it gone so far or gained such notoriety as it has in the past couple of decades. When Mona Caird in the 1880s agitated against marriage, or when Cristabel Pankhurst published *The Great Scourge* in 1913 and described men as repulsive carriers of venereal disease, they were combating particular social conditions. Their attacks were often immoderate, and there is in early feminism a strong and well-known anti-sexuality bias. Some women engaged in purity campaigns and argued for chastity for

---

Editor's Note: A version of this essay was presented at the Women's Freedom Network conference in Washington, D.C., on October 15, 1995.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

both men and women. They opposed legalization of prostitution. Some called for censorship of written materials and of art work depicting nudity. They judged male politicians on the basis of sexual morality, as did Lucy Stone in opposing Grover Cleveland's candidacy in the presidential election of 1884 because he had supposedly fathered – and taken responsibility for – an illegitimate child.

Yet these nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women did not support any sort of double standard which would have encouraged and promoted homosexual sex, while branding heterosexual sex as corrupting and contemptible. Living at an historical moment when women were struggling to win basic political rights – and were resting their claims on arguments that they had the *same* intellectual and moral capacities as men – they clearly saw that heterophobia could not be a winning tactic. The relative restraint of most early feminists is actually surprising, for they certainly would have been justified in taking a more aggressive stance at a time when women's relationships with men were characterized above all by women's civic inequality, their extreme economic dependence, lack of education, vulnerability to constant pregnancy and its attendant dangers of increasing pauperization, ill health, death.

We in this country hardly live in that sort of world – feminist scare statistics notwithstanding. Most (though not all) women in America today have many options, due principally to their access to education and to birth control and their resulting position in the labor market. And it is precisely because of these shifts, which have enormously increased women's autonomy and life opportunities, that heterophobes wishing to attack men must find ever new and more dramatic grounds for doing so.

In working on a book on the phenomenon of heterophobia, I am particularly interested in how heterosexual feminists experience being both feminist and heterosexual at a time when the two categories are often presented as antithetical, and when heterosexual women's sexual preferences and experiences are being redefined and debased by rather silly, but nonetheless influential, ideas put forth in the name of feminism.

What, for example, is a heterosexual woman to do in a climate that tells her that male potency is a threat? That the penis is an instrument of domination? How many heterosexual feminists fail to challenge heterophobia out of a secret belief that only lesbian feminists are The Real Thing? How common is it for heterosexual women who call themselves "feminists" to find their heterosexuality complicated by their feminism? How productive are such tensions? Do they lead to inhibition and awkwardness as the "heterosexual body" comes under postmodernist scrutiny? How do women negotiate the ensuing problems? How do they compare the difficulties they encounter with the gains they feel they have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

made because of feminism? How frequently are they turned off feminism, or find that the word itself does nothing for them? And, a very important question, how much of a role does heterophobia play in "ordinary" women's alienation from feminism? Far from being the result of "backlash" or bad public relations, such alienation, in my view, is a legitimate perception of much that is wrong with feminist discourse.

Somewhere along the line, the criticism of patriarchal institutions derailed into a real, visceral, and frightening antagonism toward men and a consequent intolerance toward women who insist on associating with them. I'm amazed, as I think about it, that heterosexual women have submitted to this stigmatizing of their sexual desires and personal relations, but without question many of them have done so. A few examples follow.

While interviewing students for a book I wrote in 1994 (with Noretta Koertge), *Professing Feminism: Cautionary Tales from the Strange World of Women's Studies,* I was told by a women's studies major that one of her teachers habitually referred to her "partner," without ever using a pronoun. Assuming, along with the whole class, that she was a lesbian, this student was shocked – and felt deceived – when she accidentally discovered that her professor was in fact heterosexual, married, and had a child. My question is: Why does a women's studies teacher feel obliged to engage in such a cover-up? Another instance, small but telling: following the publication of one of my early articles criticizing feminist excesses, I received a letter from a male academic who told me that he and his wife, also a professor, had been very active in setting up a women's center on their campus. When it came time to celebrate the center's anniversary, his wife had asked him not to attend the event, saying: "I don't want to flaunt my heterosexuality." A final example, from my own experience as a teacher: in my courses on women's utopian fiction I have regularly taught lesbian utopian novels without ever uttering a word of criticism to suggest that their visions offered no hope for heterosexual women. Only after I had done some thinking about heterophobia did I begin to perceive the message I was inadvertently reinforcing to my students.

How heterophobia works out at the level of social behavior is often bizarre. I remember a meeting of some women faculty who got together weekly for lunch at a university where I was on leave in the mid-eighties. One day a member of the group announced she was going to be married. There was an absolute dead silence in the room. Obviously, as feminists (both lesbian and straight), we were far too sophisticated to shriek and gush happiness, and no one knew what response to make as an alternative. So, stunned silence for far too long greeted her declaration. I have no doubt that if her news had been that she'd fallen in love with a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

woman and was about to move in with her, the reaction would have been quite different.

It seems that much of the present passionate rejection of men is explained, only apparently paradoxically, by feminism's embrace of "difference." This embrace has led to such a splintering of identity that the category "woman" can hardly be used without embarrassment. There are so many newly emergent identities to which any one group of feminists need feel inferior: white women vis-à-vis women of color; heterosexual women vis-à-vis lesbians; women of privilege vis-à-vis poor women (though, characteristically in American society, this theme seems to be of less importance than the others). The fact is that feminism is fragmented by all these divisions, which have created something that, in our book *Professing Feminism,* my co-author and I referred to as the "oppression sweepstakes." I believe this jostling for place creates so much tension within feminism that it is barely able to sustain itself as a movement in which separate identity groups keep speaking to one another. But there is one thing that, apparently, can save the day for them all, and that is hostility to men.

The crude attack on men as a group appears to provide some psychological ballast for feminists otherwise pulled in different directions by the highly politicized atmosphere in which we live. One lesbian I know deplores the heterophobic trend within feminism and has written to me in disgust that this amounts to casting men as what she calls "the universal scapegoat." Of course, on reflection, this label, too, requires qualification, since women of color and women from other parts of the world at times argue that their struggle is "together with our men." From my observations, however, the white women who put up with such talk don't really like it, and only the heavy hand of racial or ethnic identity politics keeps them from directly challenging it. So it is white men who are indisputably at the pinnacle of the hated heap – as dishonest as it is to put them there, given that significant social divisions and highly variable behavior exist among white males as they do within any other human group.

No one acquainted with women's studies programs or feminist circles generally will be unaware that some of the most widely taught and read figures are the notorious heterophobes Catharine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin, and Mary Daly. I cannot bring myself to call these women "radical" feminists, as they are so often labelled, because I do not believe they go to the "root" of anything. Instead, they manifest a pathological aversion to men, and I hold that their views have had a strong and negative influence on feminism and its future, in the classroom and out. One could, of course, argue that some of their extreme positions – such as "all intercourse is rape," or "all men are potential rapists" – are useful as ral-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lying cries for necessary social change, creating an audience capable of demanding that rape should never happen, that no woman should ever be the victim of sexual assault. And I think, in fact, that something must be conceded to such an argument. But more than this must be said, for how can one view with equanimity an agenda whose spokeswomen feel free to make grossly demeaning generalizations about half the world? Consider the following examples.

A year ago, on FEMISA, which is an e-mail list devoted to issues of gender and international relations, someone announced that she was preparing a paper contending that fathers are necessary for children's development. But, she said, "I would be helped by arguments that proved the opposite: that men are unnecessary for a child to grow into mature adulthood." Quite a few people were happy to oblige. One wrote:

> Men, as a group, tend to be abusive, either verbally, sexually or emotionally. There are always the exceptions, but they are few and far between (I am married to one of them). There are different levels of violence and abuse and individual men buy into this system by varying degrees. But the male power structure always remains intact.

Another poster contributed a long message in the same vein:

> Considering the nature and pervasiveness of men's violence, I would say that without question, children are better off being raised without the presence of men. Assaults on women and children are mostly perpetrated by men whom they are supposed to love and trust: fathers, brothers, uncles, grandfathers, stepfathers.

Disregarding the ample evidence, readily available, that women, too, are responsible for child abuse (and even child murder), this message continued:

> I agree with the many feminists who have argued that the role of fathers as perpetrators of sexual, emotional, and physical violence against female children is absolutely critical to the maintenance of male supremacy. Through incest, girls learn about subordination on the most basic level, and are thus prepared for their proper roles as women in this society.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In a stunning example of concept stretching, this last contributor explained that when she uses the word "abusive," she means "to include the assertion of male dominance." The number of men who do not fit this profile, she wrote, is so small as to be "negligible." Though the FEMISA list is supposed to maintain an "international" perspective, these posters did not bother to qualify their statements, presumably intending them to characterize all men in every country in the world. When a few men on FEMISA *did* protest the male-bashing going on – not considered "flames," but perfectly appropriate messages – it was they who were summarily removed from the list.

When I become aware of such mind-numbing caricatures of male behavior, I am often reminded of a scene I repeatedly witnessed years ago when I was living in Paris. At the post office, at the end of the week, working-class men who were obviously immigrant laborers in France (Greek and Turkish men mostly, at that time) used to line up to send their money home, often to places so remote that long discussions ensued as the clerks tried to figure out just which particular village or island was addressed. I used to stand in line behind these men, week after week, asking myself: what keeps them coming back here? Badly dressed, surely living in poor accommodations, yet faithful, determined to support their families, why do they do it? Nothing in the feminist extremist vision allows one to understand the behavior of such men – except, of course, the gross supposition that what they are really manifesting is their economic power so that one day they will be able to return home and resume tyrannizing their wives and children.

At about the same time that I was observing and wondering about these men, a woman in the United States was composing what later became a famous "feminist" document. She wrote:

> Life in this society being, at best, an utter bore and no aspect of society being at all relevant to women, there remains to civic-minded, responsible, thrill-seeking females only to overthrow the government, eliminate the money system, institute complete automation, and destroy the male sex.

This statement comes, of course, from Valerie Solanas, whom some readers may remember as the author, in 1968, of the *SCUM Manifesto,* and whom moviegoers can now see as the heroine of a recent film. By being SCUM – members of the Society for Cutting Up Men – Solanas argued, women could quickly take over the country. Foreshadowing the intense animosity between many feminist women and their non-feminist

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sisters, she pinpointed the real conflict as not that between females and males, but between SCUM – whom she defines as women who are dominant, secure, proud, independent – and those she contemptuously labels "approval-seeking Daddy's Girls." Among the things SCUM will do when it takes over is "destroy all useless and harmful objects – cars, store windows, 'Great Art,' etc." "SCUM will couple-bust," Solanas ominously announced; it will "barge into mixed (male-female) couples, wherever they are, and bust them up." And, in case anyone remains in some doubt as to what SCUM has in mind for men, Solanas spells it out (showing that Mary Daly and Andrea Dworkin are mere latecomers and also-rans): "SCUM will kill all men who are not in the Men's Auxiliary of SCUM. Men in the Men's Auxiliary are those men who are working diligently to eliminate themselves."

Solanas can probably be dismissed as part of the lunatic fringe. Some have tried to deal with the problem posed for feminists by her Manifesto by labeling it satire. But such a view is belied by Solanas's own actions. She is, after all, the woman who, in June 1968, shot and nearly killed Andy Warhol (and one of his associates) over Warhol's apparent lack of interest in a film script entitled "Up Your Ass" that she had submitted to him. And what is one to make of Solanas's feminist champions, such as the two representatives of NOW, Ti-Grace Atkinson and the attorney Florence Kennedy, who accompanied Solanas to court? According to Victor Bockris's *The Life and Death of Andy Warhol* (1989), Atkinson said at this court appearance that Solanas would go down in history as "the first outstanding champion of women's rights," while Flo Kennedy called her "one of the most important spokeswomen of the feminist movement." Such views are echoed by feminist writer Vivian Gornick. In her long introduction to the 1970 edition of the *SCUM Manifesto,* Gornick called Solanas a visionary who "understood the true nature of the struggle" for women's liberation. One can well imagine the reaction of feminists if a male would-be murderer of women were honored in this way.

But even if one grants that Solanas is an extreme and atypical case (and the movie *I Shot Andy Warhol* clearly portrays her descent into madness), what shall we say of Sally Miller Gearhart, a professor of communications who, nearly fifteen years after Solanas, wrote an essay entitled, 'The Future – If There Is One – Is Female" (in the 1982 volume *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence,* edited by Pam McAllister)? Gearhart's argument, like Solanas's, is simple: the future must be in female hands, women alone must control the reproduction of the species (with men given no say in it whatsoever), and only ten percent of the population should be allowed to be male. Gearhart plays a few notes of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sweet reason, granting that, since we cannot be sure men are inherently destructive or women naturally nurturing, men should not be eliminated altogether.

Like Gearhart, I myself used to believe that women should run the world. Even if we couldn't be sure what women *would* do, it was reasonable, I used to argue, to expect that we would make no worse a job of it than men had done. That was before I spent ten years in a women's studies program and saw for myself how, in practice, women deal with conflict. It was an experience which convinced me that women are in no way superior to men in political virtue, kindness, or even plain good sense. It also persuaded me that we should keep muddling on toward equality between the sexes, and that the best way of pursuing this goal is to avoid the language of hate.

But this is not what feminist extremists have in mind. Like Valerie Solanas and her *SCUM Manifesto,* Professor Gearhart calls upon men to participate in their own demise by voluntarily assisting in a program of reducing their own numbers (she makes reassuringly clear that she does not contemplate mass murder, but, rather, slow attrition through new reproductive technologies and support from men for feminist goals.) And from what I see on the feminist e-mail lists, there are indeed groveling males in the world who would gladly go along even with this policy for the sake of maintaining their cherished but never entirely secure status as "feminist men." It appears that not only women are inclined to knuckle under to strong speech and intimations of power.

Gearhart's essay on the female future in fact reveals that in her view not all women are equally qualified to build the better society to come. One would, of course, want to know at the outset how conflicts among women are to be resolved in Gearhart's vision. But she has nothing to say about this problem. As a lesbian-feminist activist, she, however, does know which women can – and which can *not* – be permitted to exercise power. Women who might not go along with her views are, she says, "enslaved by male-identification and years of practice within the system." No attention need be paid to them. Such women, along with men, will need to be subjected to "education" in the "voluntary [sic] and vast changes that must take place."

The claim that women's rule would necessarily lead to peace and order in the world (a staple notion of feminist utopian fiction, a subject I have been teaching for years), and that political in-fighting would vanish is, of course, nonsense. It is a childish dream, perhaps a touching one, but still nothing more than a dream. Let us ignore, for the moment, the fact that women as a group do not see eye to eye or hold identical ideas (how could they?). Women are not, after all, natural socialists, or born egalitari-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ans, though many feminist writers like to pretend that they are. What do we find when we investigate how women actually handle conflicts? One woman, Rachel Bedard, who became a lesbian separatist for a while after her marriage failed, has left the following account (in Pam McAllister's volume cited above):

> I moved into a separatist house with tremendous expectations of feminist support and nurturance. But within weeks we were divided over everything from dinner hour to cats to who owned which soap in the bathroom.

No doubt feminist extremists will blame this discord, too, on The Patriarchy. In any event, Bedard's household broke up, and she, though ostracized by feminist friends for doing so, eventually returned to heterosexuality. Bedard, tellingly, titles her account of these experiences, "Re-entering Complexity."

If we reject – as it seems obvious we must – the notion that a world ruled by feminists would necessarily be a superior one of peace and harmony, we have the right, even the obligation, to ask what sorts of political processes feminists would set in place instead of the much despised masculinist ones. And how will the feminist future deal with dissenters? On this subject feminist utopian fiction should have something to tell us. But it does so only too rarely. Even my undergraduate students notice that Charlotte Perkins Gilman's utopian novel *Herland* (1915), which describes an all-female society, presumes lack of conflict rather than outlines mechanisms for dealing with it. And they recognize, too, the coercive manipulations which subtly underlie that society: the pressure brought to bear on women who are not – by the society's eugenic standards – deemed worthy of reproduction (accomplished through parthenogenesis in the novel). And if social pressure fails, the novel tells us, more stringent measures are taken. These measures, however, are not described in the novel, so that we are left to wonder: do the uncooperative women undergo forced abortion?

In many ways, the anti-sex rhetoric (and, more generally, the anti-male campaign) of contemporary heterophobes is an intense assault on the private sphere; as such, it recalls the many feminist utopian novels that depict future societies where there is little individual autonomy. And it makes sense that extremists should go after the private sphere, for it is in the realm of the personal that their ideas are most vulnerable. Not surprisingly, perhaps, feminist extremists at times exempt themselves from the behavioral norms they wish to impose on all other women. In prac-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tice, they often carve out little pockets in which their particular personal lives and tastes can continue untainted, and it is only other women whose lives need to be scrutinized, regulated, and – if they do not measure up – scorned. How else explain that Andrea Dworkin, with her notoriously hateful writings about men and heterosexuality in general, has also written lovingly about her own father, a feminist man to whom she says she owes her passion for writing and her independent spirit? And how else can we explain Catharine MacKinnon's apparent belief that while other women cannot give informed consent, she herself can? This seems a fair inference to draw from those affectionate photographs seen a few years ago of MacKinnon arm-in-arm with her then-fiancé Jeffrey Masson. Clearly, these women are prepared to impose their views on others, while, for themselves, they maintain the rights belonging to autonomous adults. This is the standard tactic of authoritarian leaders.

Faced with the incontrovertible fact that many women who are economically independent nonetheless seem to like living with men, heterophobes have had to bring out their heavy artillery. The older of the two main weapons is simply to unleash the language of hate against men, to heap such abuse on them that it becomes difficult for self-respecting women who consider themselves feminists to associate with males.

A newer tool in the feminist arsenal is the postmodernist obfuscation of "problematizing" not only gender but also sex, and representing these as entirely imaginary constructs which – once we see them for what they are – will cease enslaving us. In other words, once we learn that "sexual preference" and even our own "sexual identity" are "social constructions," the products of social conditioning that force us to limit our lovers to a particular group of people, heterosexual relations as we know them will come to an end, along with all questions of sexual "identity" and "preference." For in this view, not only gender but even sexual identity is performance, it is ideology, but it is certainly not an essential part of the self-definition of free and thoughtful human beings who actually are born female and male.

Some of the reasons for advancing these extraordinary arguments are, of course, easy to understand. Some proponents may honestly think that it is not possible to gain civil equality for gays and lesbians except by stigmatizing heterosexuality, or at least by "problematizing" it. In this view, gay-rights activism, like feminism, is a zero-sum game: whatever I win, you lose. If my being homosexual is to be valued, your being heterosexual must be debased. But this seems a doomed strategy, since such theorizing will have little effect on the vast majority of people, who will no doubt go right on being stubbornly heterosexual while feeling nothing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but alienation from the sort of feminists who tell them they shouldn't be doing what they're doing, and certainly should not consider it "natural."

A dismal illustration of postmodernist approaches to sexuality – and a textbook case of heterophobia at work – is provided by a recent article entitled "The Medicalization of Impotence: Normalizing Phallocentrism," by Lenore Tiefer (in *Gender and Society,* September 1994). Its abstract states the following:

> Today, phallocentrism is perpetuated by a flourishing medical construction that focuses exclusively on penile erections as the essence of men's sexual function and satisfaction. This article describes how this medicalization is promoted by urologists, medical industries, mass media, and various entrepreneurs [offering treatments for impotence]. Many men and women provide a ready audience for this construction because of masculine ideology and gender socialization.

In this view, nobody really needs an erect penis. Presumably, the author of this article would prefer to live in the world of Professor Sally Gearhart's 1979 feminist utopia *The Wanderground,* where the women's only male allies (of whom they are nonetheless suspicious) are the gay men, called "gentles," who have voluntarily accepted impotence. The only good man, it seems, is an impotent man.

Such thinking is admittedly a minority position within the larger sphere of feminism, but the language of hate, which is embodied and prevalent in many feminist writings, should be taken seriously. It ought to be no more acceptable in the mouths of women than in the mouths of men, no more tolerable coming from feminists than from the Ku Klux Klan. And we must consider the kinds of power feminist ideas have indeed actually achieved. The relations between men and women have become "problematized," so much so that any word, any gesture, may these days give offense to women. If in the old days women's complaints against men's abusive behavior were seldom taken seriously, today things are quite different. Nor is this just a matter of social norms, of casual office behavior. There are men who have lost their jobs because of flimsy allegations of sexual harassment. Men are being deprived of due process. And many feminists quite explicitly and seriously consider that this is the way things should be. In their view, due process is merely one of the patriarchy's power tools, like freedom of speech.

Feminism has in fact been remarkably successful in creating a climate in which men's words and gestures are suspect, and in which it is now women's charges that are given quick credibility, or at least the benefit of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the doubt. Tell a man who has lost his job in a university because of a charge of sexual harassment, and cannot get another one, that feminists don't have power. But it is not only men who are the victims of such accusations. Women in academe, too, though much more rarely, are being accused of "sexual harassment" when it suits the agenda of others, even of so-called feminists.

It is frightening to see a society unleash against its own citizens codes of speech and behavior that can ensnare just about anyone, and that have as their rational underpinning nothing more than a woman's sense of "discomfort" around certain phrases or deeds. To conflate this with serious acts of sexual offense and abuse is to invite totalitarianism – the heavy hand of authority everywhere in the private sphere, until there is virtually no private sphere left. Is this an enactment of the feminist vision? It sounds more like the dystopias we're all familiar with from the novels of Zamiatin and Orwell, in which political control of sexuality is linked to the creation of an atmosphere of hysteria that has as its aim the suppression of the private sphere and the redirecting of individuals' energy toward state goals and definitions.

Consider, as well, the truly bizarre and frightening climate surrounding child sexual abuse and "recovered memories" as they are called. Innocent people are in prison as I write because of "evidence" that any sane society would have laughed out of court. Tell those victims that contemporary feminist ideas about the protections we all need from the demon of sexuality (which is always above all heterosexuality), have not had any effect. Or consider the affront of "visual harassment" – which is what one Minneapolis construction supervisor called it when urging his crew not to look at women passers-by (as reported by Wayne Washington, "No Eyeful, So City Gets an Earful," in the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune,* August 5, 1995). Perhaps all men should keep their eyes on the ground, the strategy once adopted by black men in the American South to protect themselves from charges of giving offense to white women. And what about the absurd suspicion that massive sexual harassment is going on in school yards, and the demand of grown women that little boys be made to face up to it and reform?

The writings of the most notorious and least responsible among heterophobes have enormously contributed to the creation of a "gotcha" atmosphere in which individual autonomy and its sexual manifestations in particular are under attack. And what is the justification for this assault? It is being waged "for our own good," and such niceties as democratic process and First Amendment rights may just have to be sacrificed. Heterophobia (despite its apparent relationship to the long tradition of sexual repression in America) should not be mistaken for a nostalgic return to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Victorianism. On the contrary, its best fit is with the dismaying history of twentieth-century totalitarianisms. A tendency toward totalizing pronouncements, an absence of respect for the political process – the essence of which, after all, is compromise – are quite blatant among feminist extremists. But we all bear responsibility for it if we do not speak out against it and against the indignities and falsehoods that feminist rhetoric heaps upon men as a group – a tactic that, these days, would not for an instant be tolerated if it were directed against, say, blacks, or Hispanics, or Jews, or women as a group. It is absurd to characterize every man who will not agree with feminist positions as a throwback who is, by his very disagreement, demonstrating the male drive to dominance and the desire to keep women barefoot and pregnant.

It is astonishing that decades of progress for women, decades of denunciation of misogynist ideas, should have brought us to the point where a mere reversal – a resort to misandry instead of to misogyny – should count as serious feminist thought and should be taught and promoted in the name of feminism. Thus the historical spectacle of sexual antagonism continues, with no hope that it will ever be superseded. By fanning this antagonism, feminists prove, ironically, that they are no different from their masculinist counterparts.

Feminist extremism has brought about very negative results – such as the exorbitant sexualization of all interactions between men and women, the vigilante mentality, the vocabulary of sexual harassment even at the kindergarten level, the denial of due process in universities and the workplace to men accused of sexual misdeeds, the attack on the rights of fathers, and so on. But at the same time I am arguing that this vindictive sort of feminism has nowhere to go because it alienates many women – and, of course, men, too. So which is it? Has heterophobia succeeded or is it doomed to failure? The two views can, I think, be reconciled. We need to acknowledge that the negative consequences are real, and are being felt – in unjust and frivolous accusations against men (and against women too), in the resulting loss of reputation and even of livelihood, in a strained atmosphere between the sexes, in assaults on freedom of expression and association.

All these are short-term results. They lead so obviously to a worse world that they cannot possibly endure. Other, more tyrannical and much more powerful ideologies have self-destructed; so will this. And when that happens, the damage done to feminism in the eyes of millions of potential supporters will be clearly felt. For the feminism that aimed at promoting justice and equality, not anger and revenge, will have been tainted as a far-out fringe movement, dominated by the male-bashers (who are indeed often the loudest among feminist spokespersons), and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

enormous effort will be required to restore feminism to the dignity it deserves. Because feminist extremism is creating a well-earned bad name for itself, and because it is genuinely harming people, women and men who want a better society must speak out against it. And they must do so, I think, without allying themselves with reactionary forces that truly do desire to see women under men's thumbs once again.

Yet, at the moment, the dominant trend within feminism seems still remarkably resilient to any self-criticism. When, in May 1996, I posted an announcement about my heterophobia project to the Women's Studies e-mail List, inviting reactions, scores of hostile replies poured in, by women telling me my project was dangerous and ill-conceived, and that either there was no such thing as heterophobia within feminism, or it was justified by men's behavior. Many of the respondents, furthermore, cast aspersions on my motives in pursuing this subject, and criticized my "methodology" for inviting anecdotal evidence to confirm what they considered to be an invalid and ideologically biased project (a most interesting criticism, coming from feminists). Even the feminist novelist Marge Piercy, who, I assume, would not take kindly to suggestions that she recast her writing according to someone else's views, urged that I reconsider or redefine my project.

There have, of course, always been sane feminists, who have seen the dangers of the domination of either sex over the other. One such figure was the British writer Katharine Burdekin, who, in the 1930s, wrote a series of remarkable feminist-inspired utopian and dystopian novels. In a novel called *Proud Man,* originally published in 1934 under the male pseudonym Murray Constantine (and reprinted by The Feminist Press in 1993), Burdekin outlined her critique of a world run by women. The narrator of the novel, an androgynous being from a future that it calls *human,* observes life in England in the 1930s and comments on the behavior of all of us *subhumans,* still living in "the childhood age":

> If women retain their biological importance, and become pleased with themselves from birth, and learn to associate power with the womb instead of with the phallus, a dominance of females over males is not only possible but likely. Their self-confidence, which would be rooted as deep as the old male jealousy, would cause in them a tremendous release of psychic power with which the males would be unable to cope. Naturally a female dominance would make the race no happier, nor bring it a whit nearer to humanity. The privilege would merely be reversed, and possibly it would be more oppressive and more cruel.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Twenty years ago I would never have suspected that we, today, would need to hear such a warning. That heterophobes, at the moment, lack substantive political power should not deceive us about the kind of world they clearly want to bring about – and would if they ever gained the means to do so. As I have argued, they have succeeded in introducing an element of genuine paranoia into the relationships of ordinary men and women, and this achievement – backed up as it is by changes in the law – should not be taken lightly. Their ideas need to be seen for what they are: a project posing as utopian that, were it ever to become reality, would instead be a nightmare.

ANNE S. WERNER

1914-1996

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INCHARDI

Novels by J. Inchardi
$20.00 each

Lines On The Death Of A Fisherman

Three Jews In A Tub

Dreamship

Yurros

A Paper Toy

Intercurse

Jehovah Mafioso

Saturn Maru

Drek Shlak

Om Budsman

The Execution Of Comrade X

The Resurrection Of Philippe D.

The Ascent Of Maryam

I Reach Over Now

Morning In Snug Harbor

Order from **Sirius Books**
P.O. Box 177
Freeport, Maine 04032

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CUSHING STROUT

A New French Connection

The French thinkers who have had so much prestige and influence in American academic literary circles in recent decades – structuralists, post-structuralists, and deconstructionists – joined Marxists in dismissing liberalism as bourgeois ideology. Postwar French intellectuals were politically enthralled by Marxism and the Soviet Communist example even when, as with Sartre, their philosophical views were humanistic, voluntaristic, and individualistic. As a result, the late French discovery of the reality of the Gulag was far more disenchanting than for American intellectuals, whose earlier romance with Communism had long been under criticism by the most sophisticated American writers, ever since in the late 1930s *Partisan Review* broke ranks with left-leaning readers to expose the totalitarian nature of the Moscow Trials. For French intellectuals, political reality was filtered much longer through a deceptive lens that made it possible to imagine that the Soviet Revolution was a fulfillment of the myth of their own. For them, Marxism and the Soviet example were (in Mark Lilla's phrase) "honorary sans-culottes."

The postwar French did develop political institutions comparable to those in England and America, but they did so, as Lilla points out, for the most part "by balancing illiberal political forces delicately against one another, not by making Europeans into liberals." Moreover, during the sixties and seventies French intellectual life was dominated by luminaries who were hostile to liberalism and humanism alike, whether they were Marxist (Althusser), Freudian (Lacan), structuralist (Levi-Strauss), deconstructionist (Derrida), or anarchistic (Foucault). For all of them, what is "demystified" is the self-conscious, willing individual and human agency in general. Power in Foucault, for example, is a ghostly presence, for it arises neither from individual nor collective interests or wills. What takes the place of agency for the antihumanists is the overwhelming collective supremacy of language, myth, social structure, the irrational, or an impersonal historical process.

It is a sign of the changing times in Paris that Bernard Lepetit, the current editor of *Annales*, the eminent historical journal, has raised the question (in a recent lecture at Cornell University), "Do French Historians Believe in Agency?" in order to assert that they should. He might well ask. Fernand Braudel, the influential editorial director of *Annales* and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

director of the Centre de Recherches Historiques for many years, confessed in his master work about the Mediterranean, that he was always tempted to see man "as enclosed in a destiny which he scarcely made, in a landscape which shows before and behind him the infinite perspectives of the *longue durée* . . . it is always the *temps long* that ends up by winning out."

American literary critics in recent decades have tended to identify Continental thought with the antihumanism of the sixties and seventies, so that, according to Lilla, certain thinkers have been "preserved in amber, venerated, and defended with a passionate dogmatism of which only Americans are capable, and of which Tocqueville remains the supreme analyst." The Spring 1995 issue of *American Studies*, for example, highlights a symposium, "Post-structuralism and American History," with the aim of providing a basis for "a post-modern historiography," even though the participants most involved in theory, as the editor notes, "have surprisingly little to say about history." The premise lingers, however, in Lilla's summation that "the post-structuralists seem to hold most of the high cards." Being on "the cutting edge" in America, it seems, is giving cultural deference to theories that are already anachronistic in France.

By 1985, the French intellectual scene was already changing, as Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut prefaced their critique of antihumanism, *French Philosophy of the Sixties,* by saying:

> Today, as everyone knows, the spirit of the 1980's is thriving on rediscovering the virtues of "subjectivity": Whether it is the rediscovered consensus around the morality of human rights, or the growing demand even on the left for individual or social autonomy from the state . . .

My own sense of the changing times in Paris came at an international conference on Tocqueville held at Yale University in 1990. I asked François Furet, an historian of the French Revolution who represented the Institut Raymond Aron in Paris, about the current status of Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida in Paris. He replied dismissively: "Passé, passé, passé." I was glad to hear that in Paris Tocqueville now held a more important place, though my colleagues in American literary departments seemed to have no inkling of it. Furet has done much to revise the historiography of the French Revolution, which used to justify Bolshevik violence with the French precedent. French Marxist historians of the Revolution were neo-Jacobins, he pointed out, celebrating

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Robespierre's integrity versus Danton's corruption" in "an academic remake of the trials of 1794," which is why they were so scandalized in 1983 by the film *Danton*. It was directed by Andrezj Wajda, a Polish anti-Stalinist exile in France, who was more sympathetic to Danton, the opponent of the Terror, than to Robespierre, who embodied it.

Furet emphasized that Revolutionary ideology, instead of being the product of circumstances, "gave its own meaning to 'circumstances' that were largely of its own making." He saw in Tocqueville a prescient groping for an understanding of a laicized eschatology that operated as a "virus of a new and unknown kind" in the radical revolutionaries. Tocqueville believed in the importance of collective ideas, beliefs, and "habits of the heart," or mores, as basic elements in human affairs, but he rejected completely Arthur de Gobineau's deterministic racism in which (as Tocqueville wrote him in 1853) "the great malady of the time" is to think that "from now on struggle and effort will be useless and that our blood, our muscles, and our nerves will always be stronger than our will and our virtue."

The recent legitimacy in France of liberalism as a topic of reflection is now available to English readers in the Princeton University Press series *New French Thought,* edited by Mark Lilla and Thomas Pavel, which includes several volumes published to date. It is good news for Americans who remember that our original French connection was a liberal one, when Thomas Jefferson, as Ambassador to France, played host in Paris to the Patriots of the Reform Party. He even drew up for General Lafayette's friends a plan for a new Charter of Rights that the King might submit to the French people. Jefferson wrote James Madison from Paris that in France the American example had been "treated like that of the Bible, open to explanation but not to question."

Nevertheless, there was some estrangement from the beginning. Jefferson urged the French to pursue freedom gradually by imitating the English constitution rather than the American example; but French liberals ignored Jefferson's advice and established centralized power in a single assembly. The gulf between French and American politics was dug wider from both sides as France's revolutions of 1830 and 1848 made it increasingly clear that French revolutions would never imitate the American one.

Tocqueville was a notable exception to this estrangement, and his *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840), based on his nine-month tour of the country, aroused liberal enthusiasm on both sides of the ocean. Even so, the second volume was greeted by the French with much more skepticism than the first, and Tocqueville, who called himself "a liberal of a new kind," was for a long time neglected by French thinkers, except for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Raymond Aron. But Aron (who chaired the national commission that is bringing out the complete works of Tocqueville) was as much out of favor in France, until the eve of his death in 1983, as he was widely esteemed in America.

The late Jean-Claude Lamberti began his *Tocqueville et les deux democraties* (1983) by wondering if Tocqueville "was in the process of being adopted as an American writer," in view of the abundance of scholarship on him in this country compared with "the scant work devoted to him in France." Modern American historians ever since the 1940s have endlessly mined Tocqueville's volumes for brilliant generalizations about American politics, society, culture, religion, and social psychology. For thirty years, moreover, influential critics of American literature followed Lionel Trilling's example in 1940 of defining our classic American writers in terms of Tocqueville's prophecy (actually based on European Romantic writers) about democratic literature. He thought it would represent the image of "man himself, taken aloof from his country and his age and standing in the presence of Nature and God." The idea made sense with respect to Emerson and Thoreau, but it never did justice to Hawthorne, Cooper, or Stowe, for example, for whom man-in-society was a compelling American subject.

Tocqueville's analysis of American religion has stimulated many sociologists and historians (including myself). He spoke of himself as "a liberal of a new kind" who admired America for having intermingled "the spirit of liberty" with "the spirit of religion," while doing so within a system of legal disestablishment of religion, which paradoxically favored its growth. He had no inkling, of course, in 1831 of the bitter political divisiveness among American religions that would mark the emergence of the Know-Nothing Party, the Klan, the Protestant campaign against Al Smith in 1928, or Pat Robertson's current populistic anti-Semitic conspiracy theory, an ideology of the Christian Right that supports censorship, school prayers, and prohibition of abortion. Tocqueville has fascinated by virtue of his binocular vision. His sense of American promise (freedom of association, liberty of the press, federalism, local government, widespread religious belief without legal establishment, civic activism) was balanced against his sense of American dangers (conformity in opinion, mediocrity of taste, excesssive commercialism, deep-seated and widespread racial prejudice). While he gratifyingly gave Americans a central role to play in history, he also made his readers apprehensive about how they would carry it out.

In his history of European liberalism Guido de Ruggiero considered Tocqueville to be "perhaps the greatest French writer of the nineteenth century." In France, however, his merit was obscured by the luster of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marx's reputation in a revolutionary culture. Tocqueville's aim as a political writer, as Lamberti emphasizes, was to unite "the spirit of liberty with the spirit of equality" and by the same token "to separate the spirit of equality from the revolutionary spirit." It would be uphill work for any French liberal. "What has always deeply offended me about the left is how little real liberalism one finds there," he wrote to a friend in 1842. The passion for revolution was much stronger among French reformers, entranced by their Revolution, which had been so much more deep-seated, violently divisive, and sweeping than the American rebellion against British imperialism. That passion had relegated Tocqueville's liberalism to the margin of French intellectual life.

The new French receptivity to Tocqueville is kin to the legitimizing of liberalism as a topic. Jean-Claude Lamberti's searching and sympathetic analysis of *Democracy in America* saluted its author for having "established liberalism on a new foundation by identifying those dangers within democratic culture that most threatened to erode its liberal component." A few years later André Jardin (who had already written a history of political liberalism) produced a major biography of Tocqueville that was available in English before the Yale conference took place. Pierre Manent's *An Intellectual History of Liberalism* appeared last year in an American edition as part of the *New French Thought* series, along with *Political Philosophy*, a collection of essays on liberal democracy edited by Mark Lilla. It makes available to Americans a remarkable development in French intellectual and political life.

Manent's incisive and concise history not only deals with French liberals (Constant, Guizot, and Tocqueville), but also enters into a discussion of the English political ideas of Hobbes and Locke with respect to the origins of liberalism in their reflections on the state of nature, political representation, equal rights, private property, and the distinction between civil society and the state. In *Political Philosophy,* Stéphane Rials, who teaches law at the University of Paris, points out that the French Declaration of Rights in 1789 spoke the Anglo-American language of rights and the separation of powers, but it "played little role in the French tradition until quite recently." Its current influence represents in his judgment "the victory of the American tradition of guaranteeing rights over the French."

Tocqueville studies have flourished in the last fifteen years on both sides of the Atlantic. Many academic conferences in America honored Tocqueville a hundred and fifty years after his *Democracy in America.* A number of essays by American professors are gathered in the volume, *Reconsidering Tocqueville's* Democracy in America (1988), edited by Abraham S. Eisenstadt, while Eduardo Nolla's collection in 1992 of the Yale conference papers, *Liberty, Equality, Democracy*, includes French, German,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Spanish, Italian, English, and American contributions. Nolla highlights the nature of the current interest in Tocqueville by calling atttention to him as a classic writer precisely because "he is not yet fully understood."

Though conservatives have often seen Tocqueville as an ally because of his dark prophecies about modernity, the historian Daniel T. Rodgers notes that Tocqueville "failed to foresee that in democracies the populace might take out the accumulated resentments of private life not on the privileges of private wealth but on the state itself, marching under the banner of tax revolts and anti-bureaucratic resentment." The current conspiratorial versions of this right-wing populism scarily illustrate Rodgers's point.

If Nolla is right that Tocqueville's liberalism is elusive or strange, I think it is mainly so because of something that Paul Janet put his finger on in 1861: "Tocqueville describes America, but he thinks of Europe; hence those contradictory observations that cannot be applied at the same time to both." Tocqueville himself wrote a friend that although he rarely spoke of France in his book, he "did not write one page of it without thinking about her" and what he wanted to have "well understood was less the complete picture of that foreign society than its contrast and resemblances to our own."

The historian Seymour Drescher in 1964 and again in 1988 perceptively described the difference in the two volumes of *Democracy in America*: "the tyranny of the majority," the most ominous danger in volume one, is superseded in the second volume by the threat of "individualism" in the sense of a withdrawal from civic affairs into private life. Tocqueville's fears about the second danger, however, derived from his observations of Normans, not Americans. Tocqueville excoriated his own government in 1848 for "a spirit of trickery, of baseness, and of bribery, which has enervated and degraded the middle classes, destroyed their public spirit, and filled them with a selfishness so blind as to induce them to separate their interests entirely from those of the lower classes from whence they sprang . . ." Janet was right about Tocqueville's double focus, but it was double not only because of his comparative method, but also because (in his own words) he "saw in America more than America," that is, he also saw in it not so much an actual country as "the image of democracy itself." Drescher points out that while the first volume was "American-democratic" in focus, the second was more "European-democratic," and "overt comparisons" were fewer in relation to "synthetic statements about democracy in general." Paradoxically this ideal type ("the image of democracy itself"), which he constructed and elaborated for analytical purposes, had more pertinence in his mind for the possible future of Europe than it did for the actual present of America.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It sketched an anti-utopia of a soft "democratic despotism" in which equality supplanted liberty, materialism supplanted religion, centralization eroded local government, and fear of revolution induced intellectual conformity, inertia, and civic passivity.

Tocqueville fervently hoped that the American example might help Europeans to fashion a democratic future, marked by freedom, knowledge, and prosperity rather than by servitude, barbarism, or wretchedness. On the other hand, his analysis emphasized that democracy in America was a unique case: "The position of the Americans is therefore quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one." Their lot is "singular" because "they have derived from the aristocracy of England the notion of private rights and the taste for local freedom; and they have been able to retain both because they have had no aristocracy to combat." Moreover, he found in the "external forms" of social contract in the origins of the Puritan colonies a kinship to "a democratic and republican religion" that seemed to him to be essential to the stability of American liberty within a legal system of strict separation between church and state.

The "distant perils" of modernity that he outlined in his second volume loomed larger on the horizon of Europe's future than the concrete solutions which he thought America had to some extent found. What he failed to make clear was how the promise he saw in American republicanism of the 1830s could be fulfilled in European terms. This point is underlined indirectly by Lamberti's basic theme about Tocqueville's thinking. Lamberti makes a strong connection with Louis Hartz in *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955) by finding the "key to the entire work" in Tocqueville's argument that Americans were in a sense "born equal instead of becoming so," that is, their Puritan and English background enabled them to attain democracy gradually "without the sufferings of a democratic revolution." As Lamberti remarks, "For a Frenchman, the event in American history that most resembles the French Revolution is the Civil War."

By contrast with America, the French had what Lamberti calls a "revolutionary culture," and (he observes) "it was the violence of the first revolutionary shock, followed by a series of other revolutions, that made it hard for liberalism to take root in a soil which had long been rendered inhospitable to it." From this perspective, Tocqueville's frustrating career in the legislature under the July Monarchy is not surprising. He explained it himself in a letter to his fellow-liberal Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard: "The liberal but not revolutionary party which alone would suit me does not exist, and, to be sure, it has not been given to me to create it." On his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own showing with respect to history it is hard to see how it ever could have developed in nineteenth-century France.

I emphasize (as Lamberti does) Tocqueville's exceptionalism about America. The term arose historically from factional American Communist debates about whether Marxist theory should take account of the special features of capitalism in the United States, and it was the Stalinists who used the term "exceptionalism" as a reproach. Today the term is used (often confusingly) by American historians in several ways. Michael Kammen, for example, the author of *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*, sometimes uses it to mean "an extraordinary degree of cultural parochialism," a lack of the "comparative impulse," a failing alleged to be "the norm among most scholars as well as the lay public" for three decades following the Second World War. At other times, however, Kammen, in his wide-ranging book, uses the concept in another sense when he refers to "a vulgate of American exceptionalism never before known" until 1924: "the emotional and literary discovery of America." (Surely, however, Emerson and Whitman were engaged in that discovery before the Civil War.) Moreover, summing up his book, Kammen implicitly uses a third and historical sense of "exceptionalism" by trying to establish as "a matter of degree" in a comparative way what is "distinctive" about the role of tradition and collective memory in American culture. Tocqueville was an exceptionalist in this third and comparative sense of Kammen's usage.

François Furet has persuasively argued that Tocqueville entered on his American journey with conceptual baggage in hand. He was bent on a comparative triangulation of three different societies – French, English, and American. Tocqueville admitted in 1835 that his ostensible aim of studying the American penitentiary system was only a pretext and a "passport that would let me enter thoroughly into the United States." He wrote a friend that "nearly ten years ago" he had been "already thinking" about some of the "things" set forth in his two volumes.

Tocqueville studies have brought French and American intellectuals into commerce with each other on a new basis of interest in liberalism as a legitimate topic, but the French Tocqueville and the American Tocqueville are not necessarily the same. Pierre Manent's original reflections on the intellectual history of liberalism emphasize its origins in aggression against religious culture, in order to prevent the individual citizen from being claimed by the Christian Church. He sees Tocqueville as bending Christianity into a kind of "secular religion." For Manent the liberal project after the Revolution is the effort "to secularize the secular religion to which it adheres" and to continue or "deepen" the Revolution. That was never Tocqueville's direction, nor an American one, but he might well

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have agreed with Manent's conclusion (influenced by the thinking of Leo Strauss) that the effort would "make impossible the stabilization of the liberal institutions implied by its principles."

Marcel Gauchet, in *Political Philosophy,* responds to the dilemma of how Tocqueville's exceptional American example could be relevant to Europe by concluding that it never was. Tocqueville was unable to see "that America's political novelty was essentially contrary to the normal march of modernity." He mistakenly saw Europe's historical experience of democratic order as obstacles to true democracy. In Europe it arises historically not from the consensus that Tocqueville thought he saw in American republicanism, but rather from internal discord over forms of government and antagonism over fundamental values. For Gauchet (unlike Tocqueville) these conflicts are not just consequences of the French Revolution. In sharp contrast to Tocqueville's sympathy for "republican religion," Gauchet argues instead that democracy is destined to be "the tomb of religion."

Anne Godignon and Jean-Louis Thiriet (who teach philosophy in Paris) in "The Rebirth of Voluntary Servitude" are closely akin to Christopher Lasch's generalizing about narcissism in American culture. Their essay is spun deductively out of the abstract notion of a self that defines itself as "devoid of definition." This person is "no longer curious about the outside world or capable of aesthetic enjoyment," is consumed by the desire for power and success, is mired in overachieving hyperprofessionalism, and is without any inner conflict. No doubt, some persons with some of these traits may be found among us, but in Godignon and Thiriet's use of this ideal type the concept is inflated like a gas balloon to represent an individualism that has "entirely transformed humankind." They fail to inspire confidence when they cite contemporary sport as an "arid, solitary, and entirely personal discipline" that "excludes any reference to others, that is, the competition." (This theory may describe some joggers, but certainly not any tennis players I have ever competed against or watched.) Tocqueville had the good sense to warn that "an abstract word is like a box with a false bottom; you may put in it what ideas you please and take them out again unobserved."

The new French interest in liberalism also is connected to English liberalism. On his second trip to England in 1835 Tocqueville married an Englishwoman, Mary Mottley, and met the great liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill, an admirer of Tocqueville's work. Mill understood that even an ideal benevolent paternalism lacked the value democracy provided by giving people the opportunity to learn from their own experience of mistakes and successes. Mill was the great defender of free speech because he knew (as campus protestors usually have not) that even confirmed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

truths, without the possibility of their being contested, decay into being held as mere conventions or prejudices.

In Lilla's anthology of political philosophy, Bernard Manin makes an incisive criticism in Mill's spirit of the model of "homo economicus," found in Rousseau and the contemporary liberal philosopher, John Rawls, as well as in devotees of classical economics. For them the rational individual is seen as having an already-formed will, which achieves its ends merely by a calculation of means. What is lost in this conception is the process of deliberation, essential to liberal democratic politics, as Mill and Tocqueville well understood, in which individuals learn more about, sharpen, or even modify their preferences and concerns through debate and conflict.

Manin's point is well worth remembering at a time of talk-radio politics in which listeners always ask of any political proposal, "What's in it for me?" – as if they already know perfectly well all they need to know about what they want. The pollsters and the talk-shows encourage people to voice their opinions on anything, whether or not they know anything about it. The current mood of the electorate and of politicians in America is to assume that the "majority" is already fit for and capable of governing, even though only a minority of the national electorate actually votes. Tocqueville wrote John Stuart Mill that he shared the ideal of English democrats, who aimed not "to force the people to be happy in the way that they judge most suitable," but rather "to put the majority of citizens in a fit state for governing and to make it capable of governing."

American conservatives have often cited Tocqueville as one of their own, but Lamberti's book is helpful in putting Tocqueville's liberalism in its French context. Given the current political influence in America of Republican economic individualism, it would be an easy mistake, as Lamberti has warned, to identify Tocqueville's liberalism with "the minimal state." Tocqueville's sober liberalism and wary sense of the future are alien to the strange "conservatism" promoted by some politicians in America today. Tocqueville wanted a central government that was delimited and subordinated to the legislative power that represents public opinion. But he also believed, as he wrote a friend in 1836, that a central government should be "energetic in its own sphere of action. Energy from the central government is even more necessary among a democratic people in whom the social force is more diffused than in an aristocracy."

Lamberti's analysis is a reminder that our original French connection was a liberal one and that Tocqueville himself was inspired by the spirit of 1789. He did not blame those who wanted to destroy the Old Regime, as he wrote a friend, but "rather the manner in which they went about it." American Republicans have been doing their best to demonize liberals;

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and even some Democrats seem to feel that they have a heritage that can no longer dare to declare its name. At the same time many American academics in the literary culture still seem to be mired in the antiliberalism of an earlier Parisian time. Rethinking liberalism needs to be done with an understanding of its traditions. It is good news that French intellectuals in the past decade have been recovering the liberal tradition as a topic of inquiry. To see Tocqueville in his own terms as "a liberal of a new kind" may help bring French and American thinking into a fruitful connection radically different from the "antihumanism" that connected them in the sixties and seventies.

Stephen Holmes has pointed out in his book, *Passions and Constraint: On the Theory of Liberal Democracy* how in the liberal philosophical tradition negative and positive liberty are (*contra* Isaiah Berlin) preconditions of each other, rather than being polar contrasts. Constitutionalism not only limits power, Holmes vigorously demonstrates, but also enables it. Jefferson was one of American liberalism's greatest founders, but in one respect James Madison understood better than Jefferson that "rigidities can create flexibilities" and that "rules are also creative." Whether those currently in power in our country are able to learn the political value of the paradoxes developed in Tocqueville and Holmes is highly questionable. But if they don't, they will merely join the long list of this century's "terrible simplifiers."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW FRENCH THOUGHT

FROM PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

An Intellectual History of Liberalism

Pierre Manent

Translated by Rebecca Balinski / With a foreword by Jerrold Seigel

"Manent has written a concise and graceful essay on the history of liberal thought. . . . [This] book makes clear that even the most emphatically political liberalisms always involve more than opinions about forms of government. Liberalism, as he reconstructs it, is an elaborate edifice of beliefs, practices and institutions. To neglect any one of these elements is, in Manent's account, to endanger the whole."—Peter Berkowitz, *The Boston Book Review*

New French Thought: Thomas Pavel and Mark Lilla, Editors

Paper: $12.95 ISBN 0-691-02911-3

Wittgenstein Reads Freud

The Myth of the Unconscious

Jacques Bouveresse

Translated by Carol Cosman / With a foreword by Vincent Descombes

"Wittgenstein is a severe critic of Freud's scientific claims, but he is not in the company of those who disparage his achievement. His remarks about Freud are scattered through his writing. Bouveresse has artfully brought them together to reveal a coherently ambivalent view of Freud."
—Eugene Goodheart, *The Boston Book Review*

"The grand Baroque architecture of Freud's thought still stands after Wittgenstein's, and Bouveresse's, peppering critique, but it no longer looks habitable."—Kenneth Baker, *San Francisco Chronicle*

New French Thought: Thomas Pavel and Mark Lilla, Editors

Paper: $12.95 ISBN 0-691-02904-0

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

AVAILABLE AT FINE BOOKSTORES OR DIRECTLY FROM THE PUBLISHER: 800-777-4726
WORLD WIDE WEB SITE: HTTP://PUP.PRINCETON.EDU

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DOROTHEA STRAUS

In the Medici Woods

The Piazza del Popolo is unimpressive by Roman standards: the church, modest, no fountain boasting exuberant marble gods and goddesses, and the multi-layered evidence of the centuries is inconspicuous here. A short, steep incline between ivy-covered walls rises directly behind the Piazza, it leads to the Medici Woods and the studio of Carlo Levi. These unspectacular landmarks speak to me of the passage of time and mortality, more forcefully than all the tombs of antiquity along the Appian Way.

I induce Carlo Levi's image, in place, as inanimate objects unlike the mobile human face are fixed in memory. The studio has white-washed walls and a high ceiling, the furniture is sparse and comfortably worn. Everything is faintly permeated by that workman-like smell, an amalgam of paint, turpentine, and new wood, but in the homey confine of his studio I catch no echo of the timbre of Levi's voice. A ladder mounts to a platform under the eaves, a single window opens to a thicket of slender bamboo trees (from the distance of years, they are in perpetual leaf). This rustic dwelling set in a patch of sylvan, fairy-tale woods, the property of France, only a few yards above the noise and hurly-burly of the Piazza del Popolo, was given to Carlo Levi in recognition of his painting.

His bulky body appears first in silhouette, reminding me of my initial glimpse of Rome: the massive, classical columns of the Pantheon, seen from a taxi at night, en route from the airport. His face emerges gradually, calm, broad, with aquiline features both kindly and archaic, topped by a thatch of thick, curly, iron-gray hair.

Carlo Levi's welcome was always warm; he possessed, in generous measure, the gift of friendship. No matter whether my husband and I found the studio filled with guests, or we were received alone, our host's attentions were invariably personal, beneficent, healing as a poultice. Actually he had earned a medical degree, years before, in his native Turin, and although he never practiced, his serene wisdom constituted, for me, a type of physicianly ideal.

Good conversation and leaden, soporific food competed with one another inside the studio. The afternoon was at its height before we climbed the ladder to the landing beneath the eaves where the laden table awaited us. The meal was interrupted, constantly, by the ring of the telephone, attesting to Levi's many friends. And just as a restaurant's string

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ensemble accompanies a hotel repast, the reiteration, "*Pronto*," punctuated lunches at the studio. We were served by a rough-hewn housekeeper who waited on her master with tender respect, never forgetting to address him as "Signor Senatori."

Carlo Levi's capabilities were manifold: painter, writer (author of the renowned *Christ Stopped at Eboli*), Communist member of Parliament, genial man-about-town. He moved through his various worlds with unruffled equilibrium, and all manner of people rejoiced at his presence.

My introduction to Rome was in 1961, at the Christmas season, and Carlo Levi was chief guide. He showed my husband and me, not so much the anticipated works of art, but rather, the living, unexploited Rome. I remember in particular the *bécasse* hanging head downward, claws tied, in the drizzle outside the butcher shops. The diminutive birds are sold as holiday delicacies, but to my view, they were pathetic corpses in this city of violent contrasts, where signs of mortality mingle everywhere with the bloom of vitality. Palms and orange trees flourish in the dead of winter, in the spring wild flowers push their frail heads between the crevices of the ruins on the Palatine Hill, citizens, undaunted, make their homes inside ancient fortifications, putting out the scarlet pennants of potted geraniums on crumbling ledges, the severe hilly horizon is frilled by umbrella pines, resembling unfurled *bel époque* parasols. And just like the healthy flesh of young Latin beauties, old walls glowed rosy and golden, even on that sunless Christmas Day. Sometimes Carlo Levi marched ahead, or we squeezed into his tiny black automobile that fitted his girth as snugly as sausage skin.

We lunched in an underground cave (a relic from the era of Julius Caesar), a working people's eating place, where the owner greeted Levi like an old friend.

"*Buono Natale*, Marco," Carlo responded. "How is the family?"

"Well, Maestro, *Dio volo*, may they remain so. I would like to ask a favor of you. My oldest daughter has painted some pictures, but she is too shy to show them to you. May I do so?"

The bearded proprietor returned, dragging a reluctant young woman.

"Giuilia, show the Maestro what you have done."

One by one, the paintings were propped against the back of a chair. Carlo Levi scrutinized each one as gravely as a dealer judging a possible acquisition. His napkin still tucked under his chin, he had parted, with some reluctance, from his knife and fork.

Later that afternoon, ignoring the fact that it was Christmas, he took us to see the oldest synagogue in Rome in the city's ghetto. Levi espoused no religion, but he knew his way around the narrow streets where tall, dingy walls created an everlasting night. Ragged children with old,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sad, wizened, pale faces, preserved, it seemed, from the Middle Ages, followed his steps. He was a familiar here; a portly, aging Pied Piper with a benign, archaic face, he spread a swath of warmth where there was only damp and chill.

Through the years, on our visits to Rome, the hours spent with Carlo Levi increased and firmed the friendship. Knowing him made me feel that I was beginning to penetrate this unfathomable city; although after that Christmas Day, we spent more and more hours inside the studio. Season in, and season out, willing prisoners, we watched the mid-day light change to evening in the bamboo woods outside the window, while our host continued to talk in his unhurried fashion – and we learned to disregard the forward movement of our watches. Undistracted by the fullness of his days, Levi found ample time for everyone and everything.

One evening, we accompanied him to a party given by Princess X. I wondered whether her home might resemble the Farnese Palace. It was there Levi occasionally picked up his mail, parking his black beetle car in front of its magnificent Renaissance façade. I never asked about this odd procedure; perhaps it was a leftover from the Fascist regime, when the building might have been used as an unsuspected covert drop by enemies of the State. Or had the dignified palace been reduced, now, to a general post office? The latter thought was as disturbing as would have been the information that the white-haired old man who operated our hotel elevator was once a ruling noble. I looked forward to observing Princess X and her circle; they might afford a glimpse into the life of the ongoing Roman aristocracy. We drove through the Borghesi Gardens, and it must have been spring because the magnolia trees, like festive candelabra, were in full bloom. But our destination turned out to be a modern concrete condominium, extending, disrespectfully, into the gracious Gardens, utilizing the surrounding greenery as though it were the parvenu planting belonging to an expensive resort hotel in Florida.

The Princess proved a disappointment also: overdressed and bejeweled, heavily made-up; her harsh voice, like a badly tuned piano, was an inadequate instrument for the mellifluous Italian language. Throughout the evening, she never ceased to flirt, unabashedly, with her handsome young butler; later I discovered them embracing in a corridor. At dinner, Carlo was placed to the right of his hostess, a seat of honor accorded to the ambassador from the realm of Art. I watched him enjoying the guests (new money and old titles) and the succession of rich courses and vintage wines, and I fancied that I saw a tipsy laurel wreath crowning his iron-gray curly head.

Life's turning points arrive when least expected. Carlo Levi, an Italian communist, was released from jail in Rome and banished for a year to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Calabria, in the southern tip of the mainland. Here, he met an experience that engendered his memoir, *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, a classic during his own time, on both sides of the Atlantic. The book appeared in 1947, and in 1992, Farrar, Straus & Giroux published a twenty-third printing. In an introductory letter to the English edition, Levi wrote:

> Many years have gone by, years of war and what men call History . . . in a world apart, I am glad to return in memory to that other world, hedged in by custom and sorrow, cut off from History and the State, eternally patient, to that land without comfort or solace, where the peasant lives out his motionless civilization on barren ground in remote poverty, and in the presence of death.
>
> "We're not 'Christians'," they say. "Christ stopped short of here, at Eboli." "Christian" in their way of speaking means human being, and this proverbial phrase that I so often heard them repeat may be no more than the expression of a hopeless feeling of inferiority. We are not "Christians," we're not human beings; we're not thought of as human beings, but simply as beasts, beasts of burden; and even less than beasts, mere creatures of the wild. . . .

In Lucania, as an exile, Carlo Levi was enlisted to treat the ill, and the people clung to him, despite his hesitation to assume responsibility without experience. Their confidence in his powers and his good rapport with them reduced the inadequate local doctor to the position of assistant. He befriended all: the "witches," bandits, fellow exiles, priests, but, especially, the peasants who eked, without protest, their meager yield from the barren soil. His painter's eye discovered beauty in the rocky terrain and the primitive dwellings growing like excrescences from the bare flanks of mountains. The movement of clouds, the change of seasons came to be action enough for this city person. A twentieth-century man of learning, he was able to accept the practice of magic spells; an atheist, he felt no revulsion before the doll idol of the Black Madonna of Viaggio, worshipped in every home.

> To the peasant, everything has a double meaning. The cow-woman, the were-wolf, the lion-baron and the goat-devil . . . People, trees, animals, even objects and words have a double life. Only reason, religion and history have clean-cut meanings. But the feeling for life, itself, for art, language and love is complex, infinitely so. And in the peasants' world there is no room for reason, religion and history. There is no room for religion because to them, everything participates in divinity, everything is actually, not merely symbolically divine.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Christ and the goat, the heavens above and the beasts in the fields below, everything is bound up, in natural magic. . . .

When I read *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, I saw Carlo Levi, a latter-day Jupiter in the guise of a mortal as political exile, circulating incognito, among the humble natives of Calabria. In the post-Eboli years when I knew him, he was more author than painter. Once in a while, he did bring out a canvas to show us, but his subjects were, exclusively, the peasants of Lucania (painted from memory) – chiefly the women, young and old, strangely alike, with great round eyes like lumps of coals sunk into emaciated faces, their stooped shoulders draped in black shawls. The portraits of Romans, from all walks of life, his livelihood before exile, were nowhere to be seen.

On a visit in late June, when the sun was intense, I wore a shade hat made from bands of grosgrain ribbon. It caught Carlo's eye, and he insisted that I should sit for a portrait. When I demurred, he assured me that it would be completed in a single afternoon. Unrattled by the cluckings of his protective housekeeper – "But Maestro, you will be late for the Senate!" – he set up his easel and prepared his palette.

I observed him as he worked with deliberation, only his eyes, beneath the overhang of his brow, darted back and forth rapidly. And, just like the proverbial tortoise who won the race against the hasty hare, Carlo Levi was confident that his steady pace would accomplish his purpose in the time allotted. When he laid aside his palette and put down his brushes, he declared, "I think that I have achieved an excellent likeness. I will keep this one for my personal collection. It will remind me of the good times we have had together."

My husband and I crept around the easel; like criminals about to learn the verdict, we dreaded confrontation with our own images. The canvas presented two figures posed before the window framing the familiar patch of bamboo woods dappled by impressionistic sunlight: a dashing Sicilian brigand and someone wearing a striped garden hat, but under its protective, modish brim, I recognized the deep-set coal eyes, the gaunt cheeks of the peasant from Lucania.

Carlo Levi is dead. Is there ever enough time to know another? Through his painting he revealed a contradictory self: a Romantic possessed by obsession – subjective, mysterious, blind, its object, a Godforsaken hamlet with an abandoned population. He never returned to Lucania, his vision remained intact. It endures on the pages of a book.

As for me, I continue to miss his presence in Rome. These days, I no longer enter the Medici Woods; the Piazza del Popolo is as far as I go.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

ARION

A Journal of Humanities and the Classics

VOLUME IV, NUMBER 1 SPRING 1996 (available now)

Part Two of *The Chorus in Greek Tragedy and Culture* features essays by **Herbert Golder, Charles Segal, William Scott, Rush Rehm, Stephen Scully,** and **Stephen Esposito;** reviews by **Bernard Knox, Oliver Taplin, Ruth Padel,** and **Robert Sonkowsky;** an original play by **Tony Harrison.**

VOLUME IV, NUMBER 2 FALL 1996 (available October)

This issue will feature essays by **Anne Carson** on Simonides and Celan, **Peter Green** on "Hellenic Continuity" and the poetry of Yannis Ritsos, **Adele Haft** on Hermes and Cattle Theft, **Ruth Padel** on Cretan Myth, and **Leslie Kurke** on Pindar and the Prostitutes; reviews by **Martin Bernal** of Burkert's *Orientalizing Revolution,* **Mary Lefkowitz** of *Feminist Theory and the Classics,* **Charles Tomlinson** of *The Oxford Book of Classical Verse in Translation,* **Simon Goldhill** of "Suspicious" Readings of *Oedipus Tyrannus,* **Roger Just** of *Demons and the Devil,* **Diskin Clay** of *The Shade of Homer,* and **Mary Blaine Campbell** of Travelers and Their Texts; translations of the poetry of Seferis and Ritsos by **Diskin Clay** and **Avi Sharon.**

PLEASE ENTER MY SUBSCRIPTION TO *ARION* (ISSN: 0095-5809)

_____ Institutional Rate, $35/volume _____
NAME

_____ Individual Rate, $19/volume _____
ADDRESS

_____ Student Rate, $12/volume _____
CITY

_____ Outside the U.S. add $3 _____
STATE ZIP

☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa TOTAL _____

Card no._____ Expiration Date_____

Signature _____

Make checks out to *Arion* and send to: **Boston University**
Office of Scholarly Publications
985 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PAUL H. ORNSTEIN

Heinz Kohut's Legacy

It is puzzling that there has been such scant exploration of the implicit or explicit assumptions about the essence of human nature to be found in psychoanalytic thought, considering how fundamental and direction-giving each theoretician's preconception has been and how far-reaching the impact of their respective amalgamated images of the human condition have been on both theory and clinical practice.

Every psychoanalytic theory has been suffused with its originator's particular image of man and woman – his or her conception of the human condition. This image has two components from two separate sources: one pre-existing in the theoretician's mind prior to psychoanalytic experience and knowledge; the other emerging in the unfolding and continued refinement of the theory itself, on the basis of expanding clinical experience. The two tend to continuously interact, and because these deeply ingrained personal views so readily become intertwined with our theory-based assumptions about human nature, both have frequently remained unexamined in the history of psychoanalysis. The result has been that our outlook on man and woman, our *Weltanschauung* or worldview, our assumptions about what our abiding human characteristics are across cultures and across the ages, have become solidified.

After Freud, only a few psychoanalytic clinicians and theoreticians have gone on to systematically articulate their own visions of human nature. Among them has been the highly original thinker, Heinz Kohut, who insisted that his own view of human nature was intrinsic to the self psychology he formulated. Throughout his work, he connected his own image of the essential nature of man with both the nature of individual psychopathology as well as the psychoanalytic curative process that is correlated with it. Kohut considered psychoanalysis to be an empirical science, just as Freud did. Yet while Kohut fully embraced the scientific worldview as Freud had done, he rejected Freud's insistence that psychoanalysis did not have, and did not need to have, its own *Weltanschauung*. Kohut thought that Freud's attitude expressed unacknowledged value judgements masquerading as value-neutral theory, supposedly based entirely on the empirical data of the analytic treatment experience and fused with a supposedly value-neutral "scientific worldview."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Whether psychoanalysis did or did not need its own *Weltanschauung* is irrelevant, since each of its multiple variants inevitably appears to have a compelling, albeit often unrecognized or disavowed, built-in worldview. The issue is that we need to become explicitly aware of the lineaments of that worldview and to study its impact on theory-building and clinical practice. Kohut recognized that his version of psychoanalysis contained a view of the human condition drastically different from Freud's. He went so far as to claim that his conception of the nature of man and woman was one of the most significant distinguishing features of his self psychology, which in itself set it apart from other psychoanalytic theories. It was this view, he maintained, that precluded self psychology's integration with other psychoanalytic theories.

The very nature of theoretical systems presents a decisive obstacle to an integration of the variously held psychoanalytic theories. Each theory claims to offer a comprehensive account of its empirical data and that its specific concepts make sense only within the context of the whole system. It is therefore impossible to use concepts based on different observational methods in other theoretical systems without drastically altering their meaning and significance. Furthermore, theories are inherently antagonistic to each other, and their proponents struggle to make their own theories the leading paradigms. Kohut, however, focused on a different set of obstacles to the integration of the "findings, concepts and theories [of self psychology] with those of other modern schools . . . in particular with those of Mahler and Winnicott." His criticism of Mahler and Winnicott was, as he wrote, that

> . . . they focus on circumscribed periods of individual development and, with the exception of certain applications in pathography . . . their work does not furnish us, as does classical analysis and self psychology, with a broad concept of man that would illuminate human pursuits and human fate "beyond the bounds of the basic rule."

Although this objection alone was not yet insurmountable, Kohut strongly favored the cross-fertilization of "genetic data obtained by reconstruction from the analyses of adults and the findings obtained by psychoanalytically sophisticated child observers and child analysts." He insisted on the fact that for this cross-fertilization "to be carried out successfully, i. e., in order that it eventuate in significant results, the basic stance of the child observer and those who reconstruct childhood experience via the analysis of transferences must be compatible." Kohut was referring to the use of the observational method of empathy, which, if

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

systematically used by psychoanalysts and child observers alike, would make their data more compatible and cross-fertilization more successful.

To demonstrate the "overriding" or "real" obstacle to the integration of the findings of self psychology with those obtained by other methods, Kohut, when asked by Otto Kernberg what he thought the difference was between his own work and Kohut's, answered that Kernberg "looked on narcissism as in essence pathological and he, Kohut, looked on it as in essence healthy." When asked a similar question by Margaret Mahler, Kohut responded by saying that "we were digging tunnels from different directions into the same area of the mountain." A decade later, Kohut said he could no longer give such short and simple answers since he had come to consider the differences between his own and Kernberg's and Mahler's ideas much more basic, "regarding the scientific evaluation of the nature of man and the significance of his unrolling life."

Kohut noted this unbridgeable obstacle again in response to the suggestion that self psychology should integrate the findings of the mother-child observers:

> . . . [T]he differences between these two outlooks are . . . of such magnitude that we would have to demand from either the other schools of thought or from self psychology the relinquishment of the central value system that determines the content of scientific observation and the significance assigned to the data.

Kohut's image of man and woman is founded in his explicitly stated views; on various aspects of his theory; and on his clinical reports. Yet his basic premise, like Freud's contrasting one, already embodies the foundation of a more comprehensive view of the human condition; the premise of each is guided by an implicit, *a priori* worldview. This becomes even clearer when comparing Kohut's basic premise to Freud's. Freud assumes that the infant is born with the innate propensity for

> . . . incestuous lustfulness, pleasure seeking and murderous wishes as primary and basic, [and these are from the beginning] on a collision course with the culture and society [represented by the caregivers] into which the human infant has to be civilized. . . . This taming, controlling and proper channeling of the drives occurs against the infant's and child's will and selfish interests. The results are at best an acquisition of a thin veneer of civilization that can, and frequently does, easily peel off, laying bare the original lustfulness and bestiality beneath. . . . Conflict is thus built into the mental apparatus from the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> very outset and culminates in the prototypically conflict-ridden Oedipus complex. From then on this conflict pervades every human activity in health and disease.

In contrast, Kohut's view can be summarized as follows:

> [T]he human infant arrives into this world preadapted – we might now say "hard-wired" – for the capacity to elicit the needed responses from its surroundings. Hence [the infant's] primary need is for connection and for response. . . . The infant is thus a social being to begin with, reaching out actively to a harmonious and receptive rather than to an antagonistic and coercively civilizing environment. So there is *no built-in primary pathogenic conflict in the human psyche*. However, conflict is inevitable because the milieu can never respond perfectly to the needs of a budding self. Hence, there will always be conflict. Such conflict becomes pathogenic or pathological, however, only if, in response to empathic failures of the selfobject milieu, the development and consolidation of the self is thwarted.

The difference is immediately obvious: Freud's infant is born into an antagonistic environment, with which it is immediately in conflict and which it has to oppose. Kohut's infant is born into a potentially harmonious, empathic milieu; there is an assumed "fit" between the infant and its environment, rather than a built-in antagonism.

Consequently, Kohut's infant actively strives for connection to its selfobject-surround in order to attain a cohesive and vital, harmonious nuclear self. Based on its innate skills and talents and the prideful, enthusiastic, affirming responses of its caregivers (mirroring selfobjects), it will develop a unique inner program or life-plan, which will become an essential part of this cohesive and vital nuclear self. Once these are attained, and reasonably consolidated, the individual's struggle will involve the maintenance of the cohesiveness and vitality of the self as well as the living out or the fulfillment of the inner program of the nuclear self. In fact, Kohut defines mental health as the capacity to employ one's innate skills and talents self-assertively, in keeping with one's ideals and values. A central task of later development will thus be the maintenance of the cohesiveness of the self and the implementation of this life-plan – to become what we are in the deepest layers of our being.

Since all of personality development and later life occurs in a self-selfobject milieu and is fundamentally influenced by it, self psychology fo-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cuses on the state of the self in its relatedness to others and sees this as the core-issue in human existence. According to Kohut:

> . . . man lives in a matrix of selfobjects from birth to death. He needs selfobjects for his psychological survival, just as he needs oxygen in his environment throughout life for physiological survival. Certainly the individual is exposed to the anxiety and guilt of unsolvable conflict and to the miseries of lowered self-esteem following the realization that he has failed to reach his aims or live up to his ideals. But so long as he feels that he is surrounded by selfobjects and feels reassured by their presence – either by their direct responses to him or, on the basis of past experiences, via his confidence in their lasting concern – even conflict, failure and defeat will not destroy his self, however great his suffering may be.

Kohut envisioned the development of the self on the basis of his reconstructions from the working through of the various selfobject transferences. In one line of development, the "grandiose self" becomes progressively transformed via the affirming, validating and admiring responses of the "mirroring selfobject" into unencumbered, healthy self-assertiveness – representing one part of the bipolar self. In this sector of the personality self-esteem and its regulation, the enjoyment of one's physical and mental capacities, as well as the unhindered pursuit of one's goals and purposes, will signal a felicitous structuralization of the self.

In another line of development the "idealized parental imago" becomes progressively transformed in response to the availability of idealizable others and to the slow, step-wise, phase-appropriate disillusionment with them, into internalized values and ideals – representing the other part of the bipolar self. In this sector of the personality the capacity for self-calming and self-soothing, the channeling of one's drive-needs, the containment of affects, and the capacity to attach oneself to higher causes and ideals with sustained enthusiasm will signal a felicitous structuralization of the self. In still another line of development the "twinship" or "alter-ego selfobjects" create the preconditions for the unfolding of talents and skills. Their unhindered functional availability to the self will signal a positive structuralization.

Kohut went on to discard the hypothesis of a "psychosexual development" (based on the vicissitudes of the sexual and later also of the aggressive drive) as a way of conceiving the attainment of health or disease. He replaced this classic, core-assumption of development with the idea that it is the availability of mirroring, idealized, and alter-ego or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

twinship selfobjects, and with them the requisite phase-appropriate experiences, that are the *sine qua non* of normal development. This drastically altered developmental hypothesis puts its distinctive stamp on what emerges as Kohut's view of the human condition. It postulates cohesiveness and consolidation as prerequisites for the self to enter, with a reasonable structural intactness providing the capacity to master the ubiquitous Oedipal conflicts, the Oedipal phase of development.

Kohut's view of the Oedipal phase and of the Oedipus complex is most revealing of his vision of the human condition and in sharp contrast to that of Freud's:

> [An Oedipal] conflict either can or cannot be resolved, depending on the consolidation of the self. A cohesive, vital, vigorous self can deal with its conflicts successfully. An enfeebled, fragmentation-prone, or fragmented self cannot. This determines the nature of the Oedipal experience. The child with a cohesive self will enter the Oedipal period exhilarated with the new challenges in spite of guilt, anxiety, and conflict. The normal Oedipal experience is not a violent, conflict-ridden phase as long as the Oedipal selfobjects respond to the child's Oedipal longings and hostilities with acceptance and empathic understanding rather than seductively or punitively. Such an Oedipal experience further consolidates the male and female self. Thus it is the harmony between the self and its selfobject milieu that determines the outcome. Both the dark side and the bright side of the personality develop from innate givens within an essentially empathic or unempathic self-selfobject matrix.

Kohut's conceptualization further diverges from Freud's in its focus on the importance of responsivity to the child's innate potentialities, emerging talents, and skills. The responses of the selfobject-milieu to the child's own potentialities (as opposed to the care-giver's ideas of what the child ought to be like) will safeguard the successful unfolding of the child's own talents and skills. What does develop, therefore, develops from within. The environment either facilitates this development or thwarts it. Thus, ideally, personality features are not mainly the result of a civilizing force; not an imposition from without – as Freud thought – that the child has to fight off tooth and nail; not developments born out of a natural antagonism, but out of a natural fit. There will, of course, be antagonisms, but those will be, again ideally, secondary, even if extremely important.

Clearly, the Oedipal period with its experiential content remained important in Kohut's view, but it was no longer as pivotal as it was in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Freud's conceptualization. For Kohut, the Oedipal conflicts, not the Oedipal complex, are universal. He considers the Oedipal complex to be itself a manifestation of a failed self-selfobject relation. In other words, the Oedipus complex is the expression of an underlying self-pathology. What we see as the drama of the Oedipus complex, the various forms of incestuous lustfulness and hostility in symptom- and character-formation, are often desperate efforts at self-healing, not attempts to hold onto infantile pleasures and destructiveness instead of renouncing them. Kohut, in connection with comparing and contrasting his view of the Oedipus complex to that of the classical view, introduced the concepts of pleasure-seeking "Guilty Man" to characterize the classical view and fulfilment-seeking "Tragic Man" to characterize the view of self psychology. He thus postulates "two major aspects of the psychological nature of man":

> Guilty Man lives within the pleasure principle; he attempts to satisfy his pleasure-seeking drives, to lessen the tensions that arise in his erogenous zones. . . . Tragic Man, on the other hand, seeks to express the pattern of his nuclear self; his endeavors lie beyond the pleasure principle.

Kohut valued classic metapsychology as having "illuminated and explained a vast area of human psychic life that had heretofore been covered by darkness . . . [but it] left a significant and important layer of human experience essentially untouched." Attempts to apply the understanding of Guilty Man to the understanding of this other layer of experience, that of Tragic Man, were misguided. He argued:

> Classical theory cannot illuminate the essence of fractured, enfeebled, discontinuous human existence: it cannot explain the essence of the schizophrenic fragmentation, the struggle of the patient who suffers from a narcissistic personality disorder to reassemble himself, the despair – the guiltless despair, I stress – of those who in late middle age discover that the basic patterns of their self as laid down in their nuclear ambitions and ideals have not been realized. Dynamic-structural metapsychology does not do justice to these problems of man, cannot encompass the problems of Tragic Man

Kohut is clear in stating that the classical view contrasted with that of self psychology does not imply a pessimistic versus an optimistic philosophy; either position might stress the positive or the negative aspects. However, he asserted, "the emphasis in self psychology is . . . more on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the growth-promoting aspects of this [Oedipal] period and in classical conflict psychology more on the pathogenic ones."

Kohut states:

> [T]he normal child's Oedipal experiences – however intense the desire for the heterogenital parent, however serious the narcissistic injuries at recognizing the impossibility of their fulfilment; however intense the competition with the homogenital parent, and however paralyzing the correlated castration anxiety – contain, from the beginning and persisting throughout, an admixture of deep joy that, while unrelated to the content of the Oedipus complex in the traditional sense, is of the utmost developmental significance within the framework of the psychology of the self.

Kohut sees the fate of Oedipal conflicts as being closely tied to parental responses. The joy he discovered in the Oedipal child (via reconstruction from the working-through of his adult patients' selfobject transferences)

> is fed from two sources . . . [although in the child this is] essentially a unitary experience . . . [from] 1.)the child's inner awareness of a significant forward move into a psychological realm of new and exciting experiences, and – of even greater importance – 2.)his participation in the glow of pride and joy that emanates from the parental selfobjects despite – indeed, also because of – their recognition of the content of their child's Oedipal desires.

Aware of the complexities and extreme variability of parental responses, Kohut remarks that "optimal parents" or rather "optimally failing parents" are people who, despite their stimulation by and competition with the rising generation, are also sufficiently in touch with the pulse of life, accept themselves sufficiently as transient participants in the ongoing stream of life, and are able to experience the growth of the next generation with unforced nondefensive joy.

Kohut also recognized the ubiquitous occurrence of intergenerational strife, and he ascribed the quasi-"magical" persistent hold on us of the Oedipal narrative to Freud's "great ability to mythologize the key concepts of his scientific system." Logic would dictate that a re-interpretation of the Oedipus myth would undermine Freud's view, in that the story begins not with Oedipus's lusting for his mother and wanting to murder his father but with his parents' rejection and abandonment of him. This

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

recognition of the full story has been around for a long time, but it has barely made a dent in the firmness with which the Freudian narrative dominates psychoanalysis and the wider Western culture.

Kohut's "counter-magic" is derived from the story told by Homer, according to which Kohut characterizes Odysseus as a

> striving resourceful man, attempting to unfold his innermost self, battling against external and internal obstacles to its unfolding; and warmly committed to the next generation, the son in whose unfolding and growth he joyfully participates thus experiencing man's deepest and most central joy, that of being a link in the chain of generations.

Kohut insists that the story of Odysseus and Telemachus portrays a healthy father's primary wish to protect the son, while Laius's and Oedipus's story portrays an already disturbed, pathological relationship.

What, then, is psychopathology from a self psychological perspective? For Kohut, assumptions regarding normal development (as reconstructed from the working-through process of analysis and correlated with the findings of modern mother-child observations), led directly to his conception of the nature of psychopathology. Endowment, coupled with the vicissitudes of the infant's and child's experiences in the selfobject milieu, determine the nature and extent of the adult's later psychopathology. Traumatic impact is not restricted to early life; it can and does occur with later traumata as well. It is the unavailability, or the unreliable and inconsistent availability, of selfobject experiences (at times coupled with actively inflicted traumata to the infant or child) that will be responsible for the specific defects or deficits in the self. Defects and deficits in the functioning of the self, and the inevitable massive defensive structures erected to protect a thus enfeebled and fragmentation-prone self, constitute the bases of the patient's psychopathology.

In the realm of self-assertive ambitions, the inadequately or inconsistently mirrored self will suffer from low self-esteem and a lack of capacity for its regulation, an inability to enjoy its mental or physical activities. Such a self will be blocked in pursuing its goals and purposes; it will feel "empty." Pervasive defensiveness will lead to massive inhibition; emotional withdrawal; social isolation due to an extreme sensitivity to slights; lack of initiative for fear of failure and criticism; and many other symptoms. Free pursuit of any activity is impossible if one constantly expects to fail.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the realm of values and ideals, the unavailability of idealizable self-objects, or their massive and traumatic de-idealization, leaves the person without the capacity to withstand being buffeted by ever-present daily injuries to self-esteem; with little ability to rebound from such experiences – hence suffering from chronic anxiety and depression. Affect regulation, its free expression or its appropriate containment, are both impaired. There is a marked incapacity for self-soothing and self-calming; the ability to turn outward, toward higher ideals, becomes impossible when the self is preoccupied with its own survival. Disintegration anxiety is the deepest central threat to such a self. When skills and talents have not had an opportunity to unfold during development or have been traumatically stunted, the individual will be deprived of self-esteem restoring capacities through performance of any of its physical or mental functions that may engender self-approval as well as expressions of creativity. Such individuals will take this state of affairs as proof of their unworthiness and inferiority.

The essential point is that these different clusters of disturbances will inevitably lead to secondary conflicts, further disabling and often paralyzing the self. Manifest passivity, severe inhibition, and lack of initiative are frequently based on the underlying deficits just described. Only the development of one of the selfobject transferences will disclose the specific nature of the deficit, its pathogenesis and treatability. Here, "real events" (as they were perceived by the child), that is, lived experiences and not drive-related fantasies, are at the root of psychopathology. Of course, these experiences do lead to fantasies, which exert their impact on the manifestations of psychopathology. The psychoanalytic treatment principles and the processes that develop in the course of analysis can never remain focused on the "real events." They have to proceed to the patient's subjective experience of those events. Whatever actual events occurred in the patient's infancy and childhood cannot be erased from the patient's past – but analyst and patient together can rework and more accurately rewrite the experiencing of that past in the present.

What kind of a psychoanalytic curative process did Kohut envision for these deficit-based, rather than primarily conflict-based disorders of the self? His own portrayal of healthy development and psychopathology reveal a tight, logical connection between the two and an equally tight and logical connection of both to the curative process. The derailment or arrest of healthy development can occur at two junctures. The first one can occur at a point when the cohesiveness and vitality of the nuclear self and the simultaneous acquisition of its basic program or life-plan are within reach. The second opportunity for derailment or arrest can arise when basic structuralization has been attained and the self is less enfee-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

blement- and fragmentation-prone than in the past. However, it may now become encumbered in its ability to fulfill its basic design or nuclear program, which for its unfolding requires a continued empathic milieu. It is at this second point that the parent's seductive or punitive responses to the child's budding Oedipal wishes may turn into an unresolved Oedipus complex. This then interferes with the free and unencumbered unfolding of the personality. But even these unresolved Oedipal struggles unmistakably contain the ubiquitous self-healing efforts self psychology sees in every human being.

Kohut described the nature of psychoanalytic cure very much in keeping with what he considered to be the essence of psychological health and psychopathology:

> Self psychology holds that self-selfobject relationships form the essence of psychological life from birth to death, that a move from dependence (symbiosis) to independence (autonomy) in the psychological sphere is no more possible than a corresponding move from a life dependent on oxygen to a life independent of it in the biological sphere. The developments that characterize normal psychological life must, in our view, be seen in the changing nature of the relationship between the self and its selfobjects, but not in the self's relinquishment of selfobjects. In particular, developmental advances cannot be understood in terms of the replacement of the selfobjects by love objects or as steps in the move from narcissism to object love.

In keeping with these ideas, the analytic process is predicated on the remobilization of thwarted needs in the various selfobject transferences. This remobilization regularly occurs against inner resistance: the fear of retraumatization. The patient's psychopathology, however, always expresses, even through the most maladaptive symptoms and behaviors, the urge for belated acquisition of those capacities whose development and unfolding were traumatically thwarted. The patient always reaches out, but this reaching out is often covered over with defensive layers difficult to penetrate. This may therefore mistakenly lead to the view that the patient resists and refuses to relate. Acceptance of the remobilized archaic needs in the transference (however disguised for self-protection) and the two steps of understanding and explaining in the interpretive process are the vehicles of cure. Optimum frustration – inevitable in the treatment process – leads to belated structure-building through "transmuting internalization," which refers to the belated maturation of archaic inner needs and potentialities and their transformation into abiding psychological

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

functions (psychic structures). Insight may accompany, precede, or follow such a process, but insight is no longer viewed as the main vehicle of cure. It is the belated structure-building that accomplishes the "cure." Kohut then reached beyond structure-building as the ultimate expression of cure by claiming that it is the capacity to find an empathically responsive selfobject milieu post-analytically that truly characterizes the essence of a psychoanalytic cure.

Kohut singled out the biologically understood concept of "drive" and the socio-psychologically understood concepts of "dependence" and "adaptation" as having led to an undesirable shift in the essence of analysis, both as theory and treatment. In his view these concepts had become "the unacknowledged and unquestioned total view of the essence of man and the essence of life." As a result psychoanalysis had

> become less of a science and more of a moral system, and psychoanalysis as therapy has become simultaneously . . . less of a scientific procedure based on the elucidation of dynamic and genetic relationships and more an educational procedure, aiming at predetermined and thus extraneous goals – which, again, are unacknowledged and unquestioned – toward which the patient is led and which, on the basis of an unacknowledged and unquestioned dimension of his transference, the patient tries to reach.

Kohut added that when "knowledge-values" and "independence-values" remain unacknowledged, these, too, distort the analyst's scientific perception and interfere with his or her ability to allow his analysands to develop in accordance with their own nuclear program and destiny. In Kohut's view, what emerged from Freudian psychoanalysis was not – as Freud had envisioned – "homo natura," "a biological unit interacting with its surroundings" but "Guilty Man," reflecting "a psychological and moral view of man." At the same time, Kohut also felt that within "certain strict limits" Freud's explanatory framework is useful, but that unless it is

> supplemented by and subordinated to the self psychological point of view which can put the self into the center of a psychological view of man, the traditional outlook will be misleading because it considers a frequently encountered set of pathological phenomena [the Oedipus complex] as constituting "normality" and leads thus to a serious misunderstanding of man in the therapeutic setting and of man in the arena of history . . .

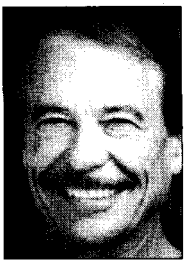
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Serious discussion of Kohut's view of the human condition and its contrast with the Freudian view has not yet taken place in the field of psychoanalytic theory, but there have been several noteworthy, in-depth studies of it conducted in evolutionary biology, among them those by Daniel Kriegman and Malcolm Slavin. They argue that evolutionary biology is a proper external platform from which to examine psychoanalytic propositions, since in a broader sense biology is "the study of life" and so is psychoanalysis. They are convinced of the validity of some of Kohut's views of human nature based on their own, independent perspective. Kriegman, for example, acknowledges as valid those "conflict-free motivational sources of the human tendency toward empathic union with others" and asserts that self psychology recognizes "a deep emotional wellspring . . . for compassion, that can give rise to altruistic behavior and that need not – and, Kohut argued, cannot – be understood within the context of a drive-based conflict psychology." Evolutionary biology also supports Kohut's notion of prideful and joyful parenthood. Kriegman suggests that "human capacities for compassion and joyful empathic union were shaped by the selective pressures that created altruism (kin altruism and reciprocal altruism)."

Modern evolutionary theory suggests that Kohut's interpretation of the clinical data may have the same degree of biological foundation in the human motivational system as we assume instinctual drives to possess. Guilty Man, riddled with conflict, may in fact be, as Kohut viewed him, a result of the failure of the human tendency to seek out and maintain empathy based self-selfobject relationships. The theory of evolution points to a direct biological basis for this human tendency, suggesting that this tendency was selected because of the adaptive advantage conferred on those who possessed it. Evolutionary biology has been able to formulate an array of far-reaching and intriguing conclusions in its ongoing discourse with traditional psychoanalysis and self psychology. Its findings should encourage self psychology to continue, with the distinctive method of introspection and empathy so strikingly evoked by Heinz Kohut, its own study of life.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SARABANDE BOOKS
presents



Neighbor Blood
Poems by Richard Frost
ISBN 0-9641151-4-X $20.95 cloth
ISBN 0-9641151-5-8 $12.95 paper

"In this collection Richard Frost has achieved a steady colloquial tone often touched with terror at the natural and suburban world, but one that is admirable in the ease of its style and its narrative power."

—*Derek Walcott*

Flying Blind
Poems by Sharon Bryan
ISBN 0-9641151-6-6 $20.95 cloth
ISBN 0-9641151-7-4 $12.95 paper

". . . This short, sweet lexicon, ruminating the interactions of life and its descriptions, will repay readerly attention with pleasure and with wisdom gently carried. This is a delicious book of poetry, dedicated to exploring right ways of conducting our lives."

—*Peter Davison*

Bookstores contact Consortium Book Sales and Distribution at 1-800-283-3572
Individuals call Sarabande Books at 1-502-458-4028

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

KAREN WILKIN

At the Galleries

Once galleries routinely closed for the summer – museums stayed open, relying on their permanent collections as warm weather offerings – but during the affluent 1980s, this traditional seasonal break came to be ignored. Dealers found it profitable to stay open in an overheated art market, despite the discomforts of an overheated city, but with the return to the normality (or recession) of the 1990s, galleries began again to close in August. That some shut their doors as early as the end of June, or opened by appointment only, can be read as signs of financial stability or else of its opposite; either way, dealers are evidently reluctant to cater to summer visitors who merely look instead of parting with money.

Summer shows in the galleries, like *diminuendo* preludes to the annual closing, are more often than not group exhibitions, slightly expedient in-house selections from the stable. Museums, these days, usually make little distinction between summer shows and those of the rest of the year, since even institutions with marvelous collections operate on the assumption that only non-stop changing exhibitions – ideally back-to-back blockbusters – can satisfy a public that increasingly regards art as entertainment. Nonetheless, the old rhythm of the annual slowdown lingers; the most challenging, scholarly shows usually open in the fall or winter, or if they last through the summer, begin earlier, at least by the middle of June. Sometimes, the summer blockbuster seems deliberately timed to attract the maximum number of vacationers and tourists; witness this year's most desirable ticket, the Cézanne retrospective at the Philadelphia Museum, a serious study that attracted hordes of visitors throughout June, July, and August. That the show lacked the curatorial rigor of the Museum of Modern Art's sublime, definitive Matisse retrospective is another matter; it was still exhilarating to see so many outstanding pictures brought together.

The Cézanne retrospective notwithstanding, it is wise to keep your expectations of summer shows low, yet there are often real plusses to looking at art in the slack season. Group exhibitions often provide a convenient review of the past year or a preview of the next; adventurous dealers sometimes use the slow months to show new artists whom they are thinking of adding to their roster. The permanent collection galleries of the Met are peacefully empty, with frequent surprises among the sum-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Seydo Keita, *Untitled,* 1952-55, Gelatin-silver print, 35.5 x 25.5 cm. Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Ministère de la Culture, Paris. Courtesy of the Guggenheim Museum.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

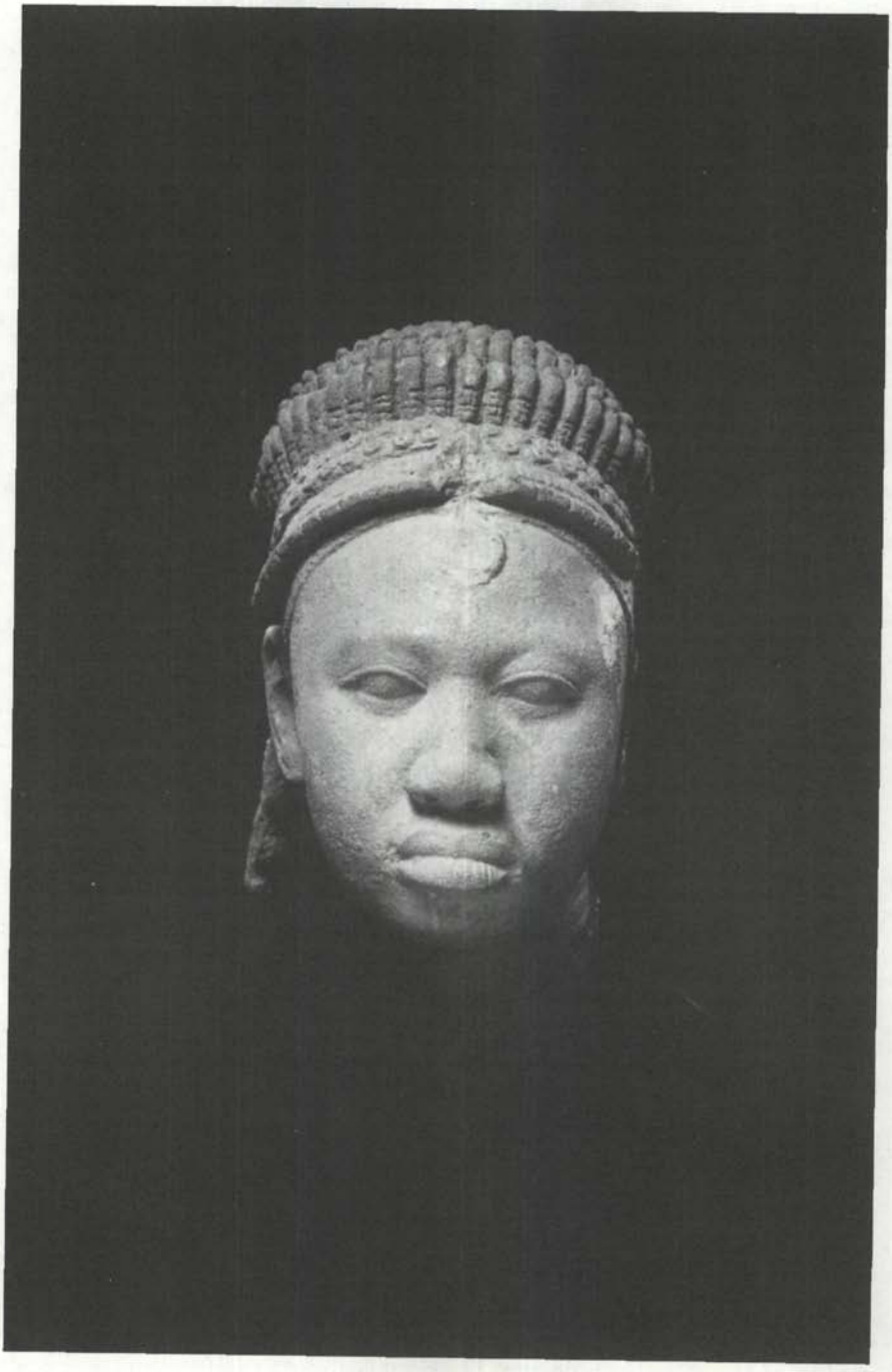
mer loans, and on rare occasions, even long-running special exhibits are fairly tranquil. And there are always exceptions to the notion that summer fare should be less demanding than the fall-winter menu.

Africa: The Art of a Continent, at the Guggenheim uptown through September 29th, is a good example. An ambitious (arguably over-ambitious) show organized by the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in association with the Guggenheim Museum, it was fascinating and irritating at the same time – fascinating because it included some superb works and irritating not only because those superb works were largely wrenched from any suggestion of context and presented rather incoherently, but because the fundamental concept of the exhibition was impossibly overreaching. Change "Africa" to "Europe," and the absurdity of a show dealing with "the art of a continent" becomes clear; try to come up with a single, comprehensible statement that adequately describes the divergent, complex artistic heritages of ancient Egypt, Islamic North Africa, and black Africa. (There is apparently worse to come; I'm told the Guggenheim plans to tackle five thousand years of Chinese art – including the last five years – in a single show.)

The real strength of the Africa exhibition was its tribal art, and it would have been far better if it had focused exclusively on tribal art. The elegantly displayed, hit-or-miss selection of historical work from non-tribal Africa was more depressing than informative – rather like visiting a distinctly minor, small, provincial museum with an inexplicably lavish installation. A companion exhibition, the modishly titled "In/sight: African Photographers. 1940 to the Present," which ranged from haunting studio portraits to angry documentary images, was a more nourishing addendum. Seydou Keita's inspired formal portraits, with their frontal poses and sumptuously patterned clothes, were like modern-day Matisses with psychological overtones, images of voluptuousness and pride, at the opposite end of the spectrum from the searing indictments of life under apartheid by the staff photographers of South Africa's controversial *Drum* magazine. The contemporary "art" part of the photography show explored predictable concerns in largly predictable ways but still served as a reminder that there are vital, engaged artists – although not all use photography as a component – working in Africa today. It also raised vexing questions about the usefulness of token representation.

The best of tribal works made up for a lot, however. Most dramatic perhaps, were a few powerful heads, many found as the result of fairly recent archeological investigations in Nigeria and Ghana. The intensity and sculptural presence of these stunning "portraits" are not surprising, but in other ways they are astonishing. African art is all too often perishable, made of fragile wood and fiber. Most works in public and private collec-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Head of a Queen, 12th-13th century, terra cotta, 25 x 17 cm. Courtesy of the Guggenheim Museum.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, having often, ironically, been saved from the ravages of climate, ritual use and destructive insects by overzealous missionaries who confiscated "heathen idols"; the well-known Benin bronzes are rare exceptions, surviving from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries because of their long-lasting material. Similarly, the heads from Nigeria and Ghana owe their existence to their imperishable terra cotta, but they are even older than the Benin heads and plaques; Plato was probably alive when the wide-eyed Nok heads with their flaring nostrils were made – originally as part of life-size figures – while the suave heads from Ife, with their elaborate hairstyles and scarifications, date from when Europeans were building Gothic cathedrals. Even more remarkable than the age of these compelling sculptures is their idealized naturalism, a highly refined transformation of perceived appearances that seems wholly at odds with the subtle abstraction and fierce stylization of most African sculpture; think of the reversed hollows and projections, reinvented body proportions, and non-Euclidian geometry that so deeply engaged Picasso, Braque, Matisse, and their colleagues at the beginning of this century. It is true that what appears to be stylistic convention in "typical" African sculpture – an elongated head poised on a slender cylinder of neck or a hemispherical face punctuated by a rigidly projecting mouth – frequently proves to be rooted in the physical appearance of particular peoples, but the Nok and Ife heads are both archetypical and amazingly specific.

It was exciting to see these little-known sculptures, yet if you were lucky enough to have seen the glorious touring exhibition dedicated to this work, *Treasures of Ancient Nigeria*, organized in 1980 by the Detroit Institute of Arts, the meagerness of the Guggenheim's selections was obvious. It seems silly to complain of meagerness in an exhibition of five hundred works – the view down the ramp was positively daunting – but the show's desire to be comprehensive precluded any depth of representation; most works, no matter how remarkable, were presented as much as emblems of a type as for their individual merits. Textiles, an important component of both tribal and Islamic Africa's aesthetic heritage, were virtually absent. More troubling, however, was the lack of context, the presentation of artifacts as objects of purely aesthetic value, with only the most schematic indication of their meaning and function within the culture that produced them.

It is undeniably important and appropriate to accord such splendid objects the respect due them as autonomous works of art, instead of regarding them as anthropological curiosities, and there are perfectly good reasons and ample precedents for this approach. Many of the greatest treasures in the history of Western art have similarly been removed from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Winslow Homer, *Undertow,* 1886, oil on canvas, 29 and 13/16 inches x 47 and 5/6 inches. Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

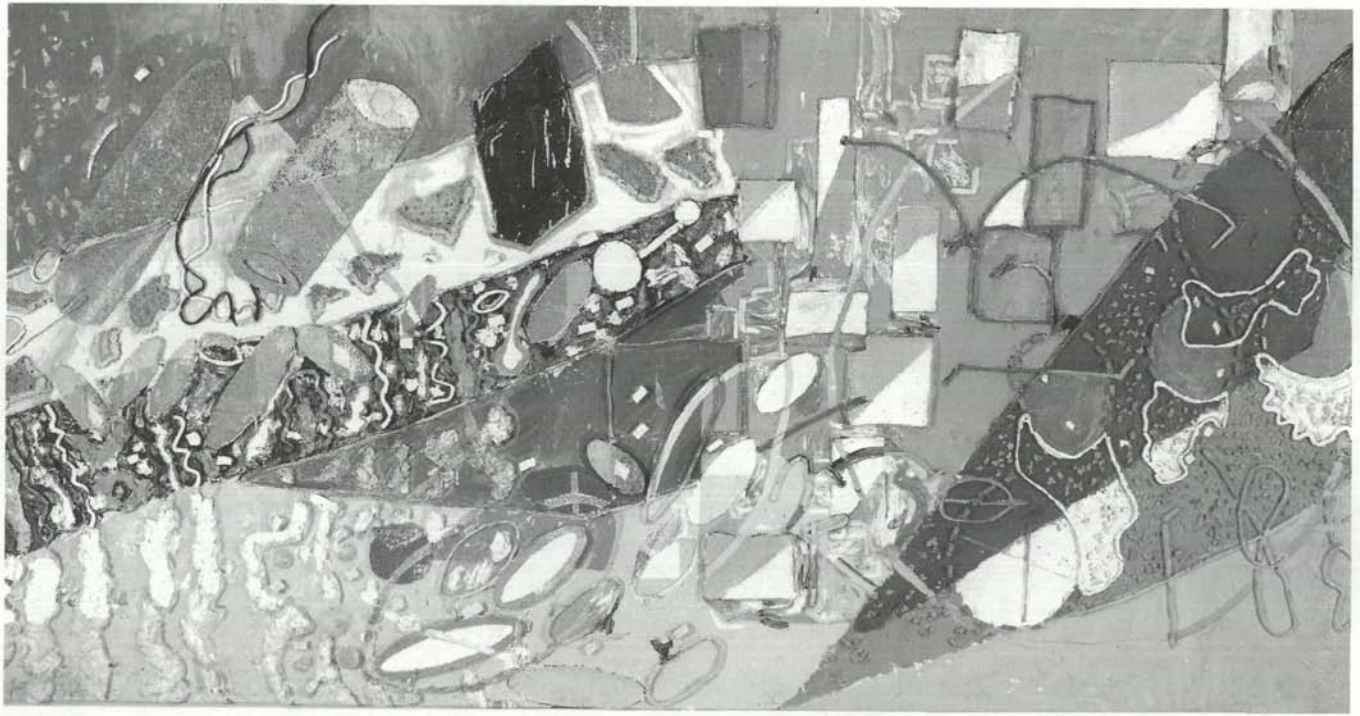
the places of ritual and worship for which they were intended and isolated in museums. Nonetheless, if the martyrdom depicted in a Renaissance altarpiece remains obscure to even a sophisticated Western museum goer, the painting's general meaning and function are perfectly clear. That's not true, for most of us, when we are confronted by African works and often, if you concentrate solely on the sculpture's formal qualities – potent as they are – you can be misled.

Only the willfully imperceptive could fail to be struck by the crashing, cascading rhythms of an overscaled Baga shoulder mask, with its beaky, flattened head and full, pendulous breasts above a double-arched "base," but if all you think of are the provocative sculptural ideas offered by the piece or the responses of Picasso and David Smith to these notions, you risk missing some of the point. When the mask was worn by a dancer, those dramatic, springing arches were invisible, hidden by an elaborate costume. Do you need to know this in order to find the Baga mask arresting? Does knowing this make the mask better? Of course not, but neither does it diminish your aesthetic pleasure. And it provokes challenging questions. Was the vital relation of the curve of the head, the droop of the breasts, and the proportion of the arches a fortunate accident created by the need to raise the head of the supernatural dancing figure high above mere mortals? Or was it considered aesthetically and emphasized by the sculptor? From the information provided at the Guggenheim, it was almost impossible to imagine the exhibited works in their original settings.

An illuminating antidote to this slightly shapeless, albeit enthusiastic take on Africa was inadvertently provided by the Museum for African Art's *Memory: Luba Art and the Making of Histories* on view from February through the end of September. Far smaller than the Guggenheim's extravaganza, the show, with its one hundred works, as has been the rule at this excellent little museum since its inception, was a model of its kind: a beautifully installed selection of first-rate pieces from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, grouped in ways that made clear their role in the traditional culture of the Luba people of modern Zaire, accompanied by intelligent, informative text panels.

Luba sculpture has long been recognized as some of the finest in Africa, so the curator of the show, Dr. Mary Nooter Roberts, trusted the formal excellence of the works of art to speak for itself and sought instead to reveal function, to demonstrate the role Luba works play "in the reconstruction of memory and the making of history." It's a complicated business, since the sculptures are not simply symbols, but objects whose visual, tactile, and spatial characteristics serve as practical aids to the keepers of an oral tradition. By juxtaposing related works, the exhibition

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Larry Poons, *Dobro,* 1996, acrylic on canvas, 82 and 3/4 inches by 160 inches. Courtesy of Salander O'Reilly Galleries.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

slowly accumulated a wealth of complex information about their meaning and use within Luba culture – all without compromising your enjoyment of the sculptures as works of art. It took nothing away from the mystery or beauty of the anthropomorphic memory boards, for example, curious objects with tortoise-patterned backs and female heads, to learn that the Luba's rigorously trained "men of memory" use the boards' constellations of beads, carved patterns, and metal punctuations as triggers for the reciting of tribal history – history whose emphasis, like our own, can be shifted according to the political needs of the ruling faction.

Far from diminishing your aesthetic acuity, the show demanded close observation, by grouping similar objects or placing classes of sculpture, such as memory boards, in new contexts to accentuate other aspects of meaning. Female figures, for example, were assembled to illustrate the role of memory in notions of beauty – through accumulated scarifications and elaborate traditional coiffures – and to affirm the important role of women within Luba society. Only a woman's body was thought to be strong enough to contain the supernatural power of a deceased king. But the groupings also made you aware of what the works had in common and how they varied. Subtle differences became obvious in the proportions and details of the figures, with their smooth, simplified contours and angular, jutting jaws and headdresses. The last, positively eye-testing section of the show consisted of stools and bowstands, all enriched by female figures, believed to be by the same master carver, along with related works by other hands, a challenging exercise in connoisseurship that made you look hard at the angles of kneeling legs and the splay of fingers, the taut vertical of a back and the inflections of a patina. (There was a good deal of commentary about how these sculptures, now all in Western museums, have become carriers of Western, modern-day histories, rather than of Luba collective memory, but it was still enlightening to see all of them together.)

The Winslow Homer retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum this summer, after being seen at the National Gallery and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, was anything but light summer fare. Every aspect of Homer's career was given full representation, from his early images of the Civil War, when he was an artist-correspondent for *Harper's Weekly*, to his last elemental "portraits" of the sea, painted after he settled permanently at Prout's Neck, Maine, in 1883. All the canonical Homers were assembled: bell-skirted women playing croquet and sturdy schoolchildren at their games, muffled fishermen in pitching boats and their massive female companions on shore, breaking waves and shipwrecks, glittering tropical landscapes and Adirondack wilderness (in translucent watercolor), and more.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Joseph Sudek, *Window of My Studio,* 1944 negative, 1953 print. Courtesy of the International Center of Photography.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Homer's essential Americanness was evident – his matter-of-fact attachment to the material presence of the world around him, its textures, its weight, and its light and shade – but what was even more evident was how hard it is to categorize this apparently straightforward artist. There's the Hemingwayesque Homer of the bravura watercolors of fishing and hunting trips, manifest in an unappetizing, beautifully painted series of how to kill a deer by making it swim until it is exhausted. There's Homer "the painter of modern life," in the sunlit scenes of people playing games and enjoying the out-of-doors during the peaceful years after the Civil War. And there's Homer the isolated observer of nature, in the meteorologically accurate depictions of the Atlantic in all kinds of weather and every time of day. The clarity of the compositions, the accuracy of the tones, the assuredness of the drawing in these pictures make Homer seem to have been a detached recorder of appearances, a dispassionate realist with an exacting eye for light. Yet his most unforgettable pictures are anything but detached; instead, they are enigmatic narratives that resist resolution. These "dark" epic dramas suggest the omnipotent power of nature, but at the same time, the men and women who are at the mercy of that power are depicted with an economy and solidity that makes them appear as implacable as nature itself. Like Melville, almost twenty years his senior, Homer at his best can transform the genre of the sea story into a passionate narrative that yields increasingly subtle meanings the more closely we look.

The exhibition leaves no doubt that the curators, Nicolai Cikovsky Jr. and Franklin Kelly, are right to insist that Homer is one of America's most important artists, a home-grown giant of his day. But he looms largest in an American context. Born in 1836, he was a little younger than Manet and Degas, and a few years older than Cézanne, but that's where useful comparison ends. Homer may have belonged to the same generation as these ferocious European innovators, but unlike them, he was an essentially conservative, albeit enormously accomplished painter. Despite the curators' assertions that his subject matter was intrinsically modern, his way of dealing with that subject matter was not. Still, the exhibition was absorbing and impressive, and those slabby, broadly painted pictures of grey rocks and tossing green water were the best antidote imaginable to a muggy summer day in New York.

Larry Poons's four new paintings at Salander-O'Reilly in July and August were among the high points of the summer. Big, brash, abrasive, exuberant, and deeply engaging, they extend the implications of the rough-hewn pictures Poons showed last year by breaking completely with the unstable pours that have preoccupied him since the early seventies. The new works are no less intuitive than what preceded them, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they are more concrete, constructed out of clearly-bounded, extended shapes and repeated, isolated elements strewn across the canvas, as though Poons simply allowed his instinct to run riot, adding whatever suggested itself or cancelling things with color, without questioning the impulse to add or subtract – trusting, as he always has, that sheer talent, that his unconscious, would get it right.

Poons takes these paintings to the limit of safety without letting them get wholly out of control, like a reckless driver with finely honed reflexes. He flirts with pictorial disaster, testing the outer limits of outrageousness with edgy color contrasts, flamboyant layering, and hamfisted drawing. From up close, the paintings look like something you might find in a landfill, but they resolve themselves into tense, disciplined chords of color, further ordered by the spread of "families" of close-valued hues and large-scale rhythms Street-smart and urban, the paintings also feel like landscapes (among other things), an association reinforced by series of vigorous "landscape" drawings exhibited with the paintings, improbable as the notion of Poons's drawing from nature may be. I liked best "Trappist," with its centralized swirl of hot color, and "Dobro," with its clash of Miami sunset hues and staccato drawing, but all four paintings impressed me with their energy, their freshness, and their sheer cussedness.

Affinities: Contemporary and Historical Art, the summer offering at Snyder Fine Art, was a group show with a difference, a pairing of artists working today with an earlier generation of (mostly) recherché modernists. In a reversal of the famous precedent set by Kootz Gallery in the late 1940s, when gallery artists each selected a younger colleague for an exhibition (Adolph Gottlieb chose the young Helen Frankenthaler), the contemporary artists in *Affinities* selected their own ancestors. The artists' statements that accompanied the show gave their reasons – long-standing admiration, a sense of shared aspirations, early influence, and more – a series of diverse connections, sometimes direct, sometimes oblique, borne out by the visual evidence. It was interesting but not surprising to see Laurie Fendrich's crisp paintings of eccentrically interlocked shapes in equally eccentric colors beside Esphyr Slobodina's delicate, equally crisp "non-objective" compositions of the 1920s or George L. K. Morris's high-minded reinterpretations of Cubist structure. Patrick Strzelec's muscular, rather angular sculptures, however, seemed at first to have little to do with the casually assembled, loose-jointed Conrad Marca-Relli collage painting Strzelec selected, but his drawings revealed his sculptures' underlying cursive rhythms and made plain the relationship. Sometimes the connection was one of spirit, rather than of appearance. Hannah Fink's ramshackle, battered constructions, like undersized, abused everyday fur-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nishings, look nothing like her chosen colleague Norris Embry's obsessively packed figure paintings, but they share a common vernacular, dislocated quality. Embry is a genuine "outsider" artist, while Fink obviously is not, but the pairing makes her intentions clearer. I was glad to see Pat Lipsky Sutton's mysterious dark paintings, repetitive grids of blacks and deep browns that are inexplicably full of color and light, and intrigued by her apparently contradictory choice of predecessors. Yet the pair, a meticulous geometric abstraction by Ilya Bolotowsky and a brushy, visceral painting by Ralph Rosenborg, made perfect sense in connection with Sutton's own work, which depends, in part, on tension between austere structure and juicy, voluptuous paint.

The other surprise of the summer was the show of the inventive Czech photographer, Josef Sudek, at the uptown branch of the International Center for Photography. (Sudek died, at the age of eighty, in 1976.) A connoisseur of what we normally fail to register consciously or erase from our field of vision, Sudek concentrated, for long periods in his long career, on making pictures of the most elusive, uninteresting subjects he encountered. His imagery is deliberately restricted and restrained: close-ups of glasses of beer; eggs, onions, and pears on heavy china plates; crumpled paper; odd corners of a garden or of his studio. His views of his studio window are just that – pictures of the glass, not of what can be seen through it. His formal portraits of beer glasses make them monumental as architecture, dramatizing both the transient play of fine bubbles rising in the liquid and the material density of thick, faceted glass.

As experimental in his printing techniques as in his subject matter, Sudek seems to have relied on printing to subtly alter his deadpan images. The ICP show concentrated on his pigment prints, which reverse the images of conventional prints and suppress detail, but offer enormous possibilities of luminosity and atmospheric tone. Where Sudek had made both conventional and pigment prints of the same image, both versions were included, creating fascinating comparisons. Part retrospective, part homage, and always illuminating, the show, it is to be hoped, will bolster the reputation of a considerable artist who is too little known in this country.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fiction

EDA KRISEOVA

The Gates Opened

It was autumn. The roses were still in bloom, but the buds on the chestnut trees were already shiny in the bright autumn sun. The nice thing about autumn is that things begin all over again before they are even finished. It is not until January that stiffness and paralysis sets in and spring feels further off than it did in November.

The Chief of Staff has yet again put off moving into his new house for the winter. He also postponed it last autumn on account of the first increase in the price of heating oil. And this year it went up again, so he is staying in his cozy service apartment, where one of the patients, thank goodness, loads the boiler with bad brown coal. The Chief of Staff's wife suffers. She would rather live in town somewhere and have a social life as in her younger days, but she knows she won't leave here alive. Considering her husband has dragged her off to this jungle, he could at least build her a house like those pictured in glossy foreign magazines. You may as well die of hard work as of anything else, the Chief of Staff would repeat to himself as he pushed a wheelbarrow-load of cement, threw sand into the cement-mixer or lent the bricklayer a hand. The patients would stare through the fence at the Chief of Staff slogging away, unable to help as it was against the rules. The patients are strong and physically fit, but the Chief of Staff is thin and can no longer straighten up because of a slipped disc. He looks forward to death as a release and stays behind in the clinic until late at night. The Chief of Staff's wife complains that they have no family life. She falls asleep alone in the marriage bed with a hot-water bottle to keep her warm. Towards morning, when the Chief of Staff has fallen asleep, his wife kicks the cold hot-water bottle in his direction, as she no longer wants it. The Chief of Staff then struggles with the icy monster until morning when the alarm clock comes to his rescue and the true nature of the monster is, as always, revealed.

The Chief of Staff stays home only when his favorite daughter Danuska comes down from university. Danuska bundles her parents into her car, seating them both in the back to stop them from hassling her, and drives at sixty miles an hour along narrow lanes lined with apple trees. Her mother bites her hankie and the Chief of Staff, I'm afraid to say, squeals with fright at every turn and begs Danuska to slow down; but she just tells him off for being late and making them miss the beginning of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

film. The Chief of Staff must put up with it; he must put up with his entire life, and sometimes it strikes him that putting up with things is much braver than fighting back. And yet those who fight are regarded as heroes while those who put up with things are considered cowards.

It had been like this ever since a new nurse appeared on the ward, and the Chief of Staff had dusted down the wings he had long ago put away in the garden shed. The wings had been fouled by the hens and pigeons but he gave them a cleaning, preened them, and straightened out the feathers. And it looked as if he was about to unfurl his old wings and soar beak-first into the sun, when the nurse persuaded him to let them know at home what he was planning. His wife took a leave of absence, and they spent a long time analyzing their marriage until there was no love left. Why couldn't he love her instead of a nurse who had had no qualms about taking a man away from his wife and a father away from his grown-up children? The Chief of Staff's wife promised to be nicer to him, and she was. She increased her dose of amatory altruism, and he, guilt-stricken, hung his wings up in the garden shed for the last time. It set him more firmly against the new house and the life he would live in it for his own good until he died. It is the only way he will achieve, in his wife's words, spiritual integrity and peace of mind.

Things in the madhouse went on just as before. Mr. Hora, one of the patients in the toughest ward, attacked a doctor as she came along the corridor after collecting her pay. He ripped up her purse with her pay in it because he couldn't stand synthetics. He had already ripped many a nurse's blouse and ruined leatherette slippers.

Alena, one of the psychologists, fell in love with her colleague Mirek. She explained that her relationship with him was compensation for the one she had not managed to live out with her father. She's dependent on her father, that's her problem. Mirek is dependent on his mother, that's his problem. His problem could be solved by her playing the maternal role, but that wouldn't solve her problem. What scope would she have for the resolution of her childhood dependence?

I asked her if Mirek loved her and if she loved him and she burst into tears. That showed me how unhappy she was and maybe why she was professionally engaged in creating human happiness.

The social worker came here this evening, and I was pleased to see her. It gets dark at six and the night is long. It is almost as if the house could not wait for dusk in order to come alive. During the day it is quiet and peaceful but at night I hear footsteps, knocking, stifled laughter, the sound of groping along the walls and squirming. Sometimes a guitar plays

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of its own accord. Outside a little owl emits a banshee wail. I open the window and yell "shush," but it won't leave me.

I pour her a glass of wine. She is just the person I wanted to see. She tells me that the Chief of Staff's best friend came from Prague to see him, a man by the name of Pergl, who pretends he has gone mad. The Chief of Staff admitted him to his ward for the time being, and now Pergl is settled in and doesn't want to leave. The presence of his best friend is an embarrassment for the Chief of Staff, but Pergl begs him fervently not to have him transferred as he is supremely happy in our establishment. He has already weeded all the rock gardens and raked up all the leaves out of sheer gratitude. He wants to hear nothing about his work or his family. He says that the family is an instrument for the exploitation of man by man and he never wants to go back to civilian life again.

"Let him stay here," the social worker urged the Chief of Staff, who was under pressure from the family. "He's happy here. The nurses are pleased to have someone normal here. Everyone's happy, Doctor, especially Pergl. Surely you wouldn't want to spoil it for them?"

The Chief of Staff kept Pergl. But each morning he wakes up with the thought: Lucky Pergl.

And so we go on chatting until late, and the social worker complains to me that the madhouse is running out of medications and every other day some patient doesn't get his particular drug and that sets him off. Reactions to tranquilizers are very individual and totally unpredictable. It's the same with therapy: there's just no convincing some patients and they refuse to cooperate. There was wide-eyed Nadenka trying to teach the sexual deviants how children are born. She spent two hours carefully explaining it all to them and then some deviant puts up his hand and says the rest of them might have been born the way Mrs. Nadenka explained, but he was brought by the stork. Nadenka patiently pointed out how that was impossible and why and the patient seemed convinced. And then a few days later Nadenka was reading the diaries that the patients have to write and what did she find? The deviant had written: Today Mrs. N. explained to us how we were born. But it doesn't apply to me. The stork brought me to the maternity hospital in Brno. Mummy told me so and she must know, seeing she was there.

"Wouldn't that drive you round the bend?" the social worker asked. "Futile, utterly futile. That's why I often read Ecclesiastes."

I had a dream in which the madhouse ran totally out of medications. The patients had eaten the whole lot and there was no future delivery. First the patients from the women's section invaded the men's wards,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

breaking down the doors, pulling out the bars, and enlisting everyone who was of any use. And straight away they made themselves some children to boost our numbers.

I was always saying to the psychiatrists - not in the dream, of course - that sexual abstinence must worsen the patients' condition. It stands to reason. The psychiatrists agreed with me but nothing was done about it. So far as I recall, they put up with only one couple: Marie and Curly the Philosopher. They were allowed to go to the woods together. They used to make love there like the deer and the slugs and the hedgehogs.

In the dream Curly was still alive and Marie was beautiful. They locked themselves in the ward and had no taste for revolution. Lovers are no threat to any system and vice versa. I expect that people who get involved in politics are mostly the sort that don't know how to love and the unhappiest are the ones who make revolutions and want to change a world in which they are not happy.

I was aware it was a dream, but I was unable to dispel it. Not that I really wanted to. On the contrary, I would go on adding new ideas and each would develop of its own accord. It was one of those early-morning, half-awake dreams that I like best.

Mr. Polácek, who had a life-long fear of women, stormed the town-hall with a hand-picked guard and appointed himself to the supreme office. He declared new laws and forced the guards to invade the homes of peaceful country folk and persuade the population of the need for change. They all said yes and then rushed off to buy food because they surmised that hard times were on the way. Meanwhile Mr. Polácek sent off ready-made, pre-stamped letters to the United Nations and the presidents of the leading powers, informing them about the creation of the new state and requesting recognition and entry into the Western organizations. He laid great stress on human rights. Mr. Hrdlicka, the postmaster, loyal to every state, read the letters and confiscated them. He regarded it as his professional duty to read letters and help people. He had always disposed of anonymous denunciations ever since the occupation. He knew all there was to know about every citizen but never used it. It was his conviction that filth should be cleaned up, not spread around. We've had enough evil, he would always say, when it looked as if better times were on the horizon. And then he would look around to see where the storm might be coming from.

Mr. Horacek launched an assault on the town hall, but when it failed he captured the radio at least, and in ingratiating tones he called on the citizens to assemble in the convent square. He made them all sorts of promises. They would have turned up had they not been afraid that Polácek might find out. So they waited at home to see how things would

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turn out and refused to get involved. Mr. Hora, the patient who can't stand plastic, rushed around the village exposing and destroying anything that was made from synthetic material. If he saw a plastic drainpipe he would wrench it out of the wall. He broke the night-light holders in the graveyard, tore the roofs off sheds and porches and destroyed bakelite door-knobs and handles. He burnt the washing on the washing-lines if it was synthetic. He really let himself go in the village dump: he gathered up all the plastic bags from the trees and fields where they had been blowing in the wind. He burnt the polythene and bakelite items and a thick pall of greasy smoke rolled over the countryside. If his fit lasts and he has enough stamina, the hopes are that he will rid the area of plastic.

Mr. Skála took over the post of director of the psychiatric hospital where the only remaining patient was Mr. Pergl. Pergl called the patients back, urging them not to go anywhere because things were worse outside. They took no notice, and the pre-war patients were rudest of all to him. He got no lunch and they didn't even bring his supper. He went to the kitchenette and found a dry crust of bread. He ate it and went to bed in his cold bedroom, where he lay waiting for his wife to find out and come to collect him.

I was walking along an avenue of pollarded lime-trees in my dream when I met them. First in line was Mr. Ryba who had gone mad on account of fish. He would always be jerking his arms and the upper part of his body as if holding a fishing rod and landing a catch. He had emptied the contents of the larder into the river and refused to speak to anyone because the fish were biting, so they locked him up in the madhouse. Now Mr. Ryba was running straight for the river.

Eliska, who had lain motionless for years, now saw that no one was gong to wash, comb or feed her any more, so she slipped out of bed, did a few exercises, and set off in search of a husband.

They moved here and there on my closed eyelids, dressed in all sorts of clothes. There was a shortage of corduroy trousers so they wore them in turns for going out on walks or going to vote every four years. Most of them left in their track suits or pajamas. Those who were lucky enough to be wearing trousers were a motley crew. The small fat ones had overlong trousers rolled up at the bottom, and they held them up with their hands, as there was never any string to be found in case someone use it to hang himself. The tall, thin ones had their trouser bottoms just below their knees. They didn't know their names or ages and had no notion of the difference between a river and a pond or who was the leader of the country either now or before. Those who yearned for power advanced across the fields and fanned out through the woods in all directions. I expect they thought all roads led to the capital.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ruzenka Maresová, who had always adored the Chief of Staff, thumped on the door of his office demanding love in terms too specific to report here. In any case, the Chief of Staff was not within. Disguised as a patient in a navy-blue track suit, he had abandoned hospital and home. And he too was running through the fields and woods to somewhere far away, whither his wife had spirited the greatest love of his life. Would she still be waiting for him perhaps?

The gates of the madhouse remained wide open. Some of the patients pillaged, others raped, but what was that compared to the Hussites?

My dream started to dissipate and lose momentum. It looked as if I'd have to run off somewhere and save the situation somehow. I opened my eyes and sat up in bed. I could see the low white ceiling and on it a clear white light and thought I was dead. I was relieved that it was behind me now, but then I looked out the window and saw that the first snow had fallen. All around the building was a pristine white layer; no footprints led in or out. It was a sign to me that the former had been a dream. Otherwise they would have been here already.

Translated from the Czech by A. G. Brain

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fifteen Years Ago Hilton Kramer Founded One of the Most Influential Periodicals in America*

Today, He's Offering You a Chance to Read It -- FREE!

Are you interested in a broad range of creative endeavor, from literature, painting, music, and architecture to theater, dance, and performance art?

Would you welcome spirited argument that engages cultural trendiness with uncompromising intellectual honesty and independence?

Will you accept a free copy of a journal that is literate, thought-provoking, and immensely fun to read?

If "YES" is your answer, we are pleased to introduce you to *The New Criterion*. For 15 years *The New Criterion*'s commitment to the highest critical standards has been an eloquent antidote to the political orthodoxy dominating our cultural life. Month after month, it serves up honest commentary and criticism on theater, the visual arts, literature, music, poetry, dance, and other points of cultural interest.

Bold, Articulate, Outspoken

It all began when Hilton Kramer dared to "disturb the universe" of contemporary arts and letters. After leaving his long-held position as *New York Times* chief art critic, Kramer started a literary-intellectual journal for the rest of us -- people who love literature and the arts but refuse to follow the lead of a single-minded critical "elite."

Today's *New Criterion* is no less committed to independence: in its critical judgments, in its expression of opinions and ideas, in its refusal to give ground to today's arbiters of artistic and literary tastes. Others have taken notice:

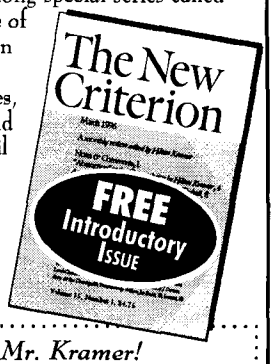
"Not since H.L. Mencken and *The American Mercury* has literary America seen so much fur fly," says *The Boston Review*

"...the best art magazine and a provocative force in other cultural areas," says *The Wall Street Journal*

"...stimulates, elucidates, and infuriates," says *The New Art Examiner*

Have a Look at Our Next Issue

Send for a free copy of our next issue. In it you'll find some of the world's most thoughtful writers reflecting on the state of the arts today as we start a year-long special series called "The Future of the European Past." Plus, great features, columns, and reviews. Mail the coupon below for a sample copy of *The New Criterion*. Do it today!



I Accept, Mr. Kramer!

Send me your next issue FREE. If I like it, I'll receive nine additional issues (a full year) for only $19.95 — a savings of over $27 off the single-copy price. Otherwise, I'll write "cancel" on your bill and owe nothing. Either way, the free issue is mine to keep. 6PR96

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

The New Criterion, P.O. Box 3000, Denville, NJ 07834

*A survey of academics, writers, and editors published by Princeton University Press cited **The New Criterion** as one of the Top 10 most influential periodicals among American intellectuals.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fiction

AVNER MANDELMAN

Life in Parts

When my father-in-law took me for the first time to a whorehouse I had been married barely two years.

"Don't be afraid," he said to me, peeling four one-thousand franc notes and slipping them into the blue porcelain bowl in the entrance. "Jews don't come here, ordinarily. Nobody will know." When I foolishly put my hand to my hip pocket, he pursed his lips and closed both eyes, giving his palms and head a fast shake, in that French *moue* meaning, "This one is on me."

We were passing through Paris, he and I, on the way back to Tel Aviv from Zurich, where he had taken me to introduce me to the Swiss banker who for the last twenty-three years had kept his account. "In case something happens," he said. "I don't want her involved." Meaning his wife.

Every year he has visited his banker, in Zurich, and on the way back passed through Paris. Up to now I had thought he did it for the food.

I myself used to live in Paris until two years previously, when I had met his daughter at a party in Neuilly (she was a swimsuit model for Gotex, the Israeli fashion firm) and went back with her to my tiny room on Avenue Voltaire. I had been foolishly trying to become a painter for more than a year, but after two days of trying to paint her in the nude I became convinced I would never be one. Somehow I kept missing something, perhaps in her skin, perhaps in her face.

"So let's get married," she said, hugging a towel over her breasts, as she sat hunched on my narrow bed, "and then you could paint me every day, if you want, after work."

When I hesitated, she said, "You could also speak French with my father. He speaks French."

Her father had been born in Marseille, into a Rabbinical family all of whom later perished in the Molech's maw; but as he had left home early to ride horses in Auteuil (the first Jewish jockey ever, I am told), pretending to be a goy, he was spared. Later he joined the Resistance, helping General Boca in the Maquis, and after the war ended hunted a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

few Nazis, on his own, before coming to Israel, where he helped start the Tel Aviv stock exchange and launch three small conglomerates.

He was already retired when I married his daughter and reluctantly returned to Tel Aviv to work in advertising and do reserve service. We never talked much, he and I, but after his first heart attack he called me and said he must take me to Zurich, to show me a few things.

"You can take a week off?" he asked.

"Yes, I think so," I said.

He had gotten me the job, when I came back, through his stock exchange connections. I didn't earn much yet, but I worked nights and so had good prospects.

"I'll talk to Shaike," he said.

Shaike was my boss.

"No," I said. "I'll talk to him."

There was a little pause.

"And from there we'll go through Paris," my father-in-law went on, "to eat something, maybe also look around. You like Paris?"

"Yes, sure," I said, recalling the food.

But I hadn't banked on this.

For a full minute I remained standing outside, in the yellow sunshine, while he patiently waited for me to make up my mind.

"Whatever you want," he said.

"All right," I said at last.

The whorehouse was on the ground floor of a gray office building on the good side of Avenue Foche, close to the Bois de Boulogne. Inside, it looked like the Zurich private bank we had just visited two days before; but it was better lit, with table-top lamps, not ceiling neons, in the corridor, and Caucasian carpets, not Persian ones. ("Shirvan," my father-in-law said, pointing, "and this is a Daghestan.") The old mustachioed concierge at his formica desk, in front, looked like any gatekeeper at a law firm. He nodded at my father-in-law gravely, greeting him by name.

"A young friend," my father-in-law said, indicating me with his chin.

We stayed until midnight, then returned by taxi to the Hotel Lutèce, where my father-in-law already had reserved two rooms. There, too, they seemed to know him. It was a small hotel on the Ile St. Louis in the middle of the Seine, with a flower-infested courtyard, and narrow rooms with high domed ceilings. It was May, and lilac bloomed everywhere.

"She's like her mother, I am sure," my father-in-law said to me the next morning, as we sat at a tiny table on the second floor of *Le Drug Store,* at the entrance of the Champs Elyseés, dipping croissants in pitch-like coffee. "Frigid. I saw how she walks. A man can tell."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

My father-in-law had a theory that men could tell about women, and horses, with a glance. All it took was practice.

I hoisted my shoulder, not denying, not confirming. I had never betrayed my wife before and had never planned to, so the previous night had thrown me into extreme confusion, and I hardly knew what to say. But I felt that confirming my father-in-law's suspicions would be going too far.

He went on, speaking into the air alongside my ear, "Her mother, she was always cold." He used the French word, also meaning stuck-up. "I don't know why I love her." Then he leveled his eyes at me. "Believe me, it's better like this, with a *pute,* not with someone else's wife, or girls from the street. That, no. That is too dangerous."

"Oh no," I said. "Never."

We were talking in French: he, because he liked it; me, to give him pleasure. Before we had gone on this trip, before his heart attack, we had not talked that often; and when we did, it was usually in Hebrew.

"That's how it is," my father-in-law said, again talking to the air beside me. "*Que voulez vouz.*"

He had ordered a double café-calvados, the small espresso spiked with firey prune cognac that is the traditional pick-me-up for weary debauchers the morning after. It now arrived, and he tossed it back, quickly.

In his wavy silvery hair and capped teeth he looked like a compact Maurice Chevalier with a Bourville nose. "She is, *hein*?"

I hoisted my shoulders again, torn between my allegiance to my wife and my debt to the man who had just introduced me to his Swiss banker and to a five-star whorehouse I could never have discovered on my own, nor afforded.

"*Comme-ci, comma-ça,*" I said at last, looking away.

Outside, on the sidewalk, a clutch of young women passed, laughing musically. One of them waved to someone inside *Le Drug Store*. Three men waved back. My father-in-law waved too.

"Men and women have only three ways to be compatible," he said, bending his fingers, one by one. "Physical, emotional, intellectual. You can never have all three, never. Two," he raised two bony fingers in a narrow *v,* "is maximum. This is a proven medical fact, by doctors. Believe me. So which would you give up?"

I said nothing. The fucking of the previous night still reverberated in my spine. I had never had anything like this before in my life, the smoothness, the rhythm, the ease of it. My *pute* had been a slim short-haired medical student from the Sorbonne, saving her money (so she said) for a flight to Kansas, to visit her boyfriend. "He's in farming," she said. "He grows wheat, barley, also oats. A farmer."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We had already had sex twice (the two thousand francs price was *tout compris)* but stayed entangled, talking. (We were talking in English, for her benefit: "I have to practice," she said.)

When I said that flights to the U.S. were cheap, that she could probably fly by charter from Brussels for less than 1,000 francs, she said she wanted to fly the Concorde, from Paris. "Like a chic movie star, with champagne. Why not? I don't deserve?" Then, perhaps to change the topic, she began to name my muscles, touching them one by one, as if this was a private anatomy lesson. "Deltoid, abdominal rectus, long adductor, sartorius – no, this is not a muscle. Now the bones: Ilium, sacrum, ischium – no, no, it is not a bone either –"

Afterwards she gave me a phone number in Kansas, of a messaging service ("that's the one I call – just say it's for Amande"), in case I ever passed there. "It's far from New York?"

"So so," I said. (I had boasted to her before that I might go to New York on business next year.)

"He lives near Kansas City, with his wife, so I'll have time."

When I left she combed my hair, slicking it with her saliva.

"Me," my father-in-law said into his coffee cup, "at home I want heart and head. This –" he touched his crotch, delicately, "this I can buy outside, everywhere." Then, leaning back in his chair, he began to speak of the account in Zurich, how important it was that I never forgot its number; but I interrupted him and said I didn't believe there were only three ways for men and women to be compatible.

"Oh yes," he said. "It's well known. Medically."

"Why only three?"

"That's how it is."

Forty years before, after he was done chasing Nazis and just before he left Europe for Palestine, he had studied rhetoric and philosophy for a few months at *L'École des Sciences Politiques* in Paris (as an *ancien Maquisard* he could study for free). The school then was run by the Jesuits, who, like all true Cartesians, taught that everything in the world was divided into three parts, so that it was more easily grasped.

This, I have since become convinced, is the secret key to the French national soul: it, too, is divided into three separate parts, none of which ever mixes with the others. In this regard, at least, my father-in-law is a true Frenchman.

"Come," he said. "Let's go eat something good."

The night before, in a small restaurant on the Ile St. Louis, near the hotel, we had eaten an *andouillette:* a slice of the large intestine of a cow, well scraped. It had been boiled nearly white and came smeared with a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hot Dijon mustard sauce, and was accompanied by snails in garlic butter, but still retained a mild odor of shit.

Only very few people liked it, my father-in-law explained, so there was a special society for them, the *AAAA: L'Association Anonyme d'Amants des Andouillettes*. The Anonymous Association of the Lovers of Tripe. He had once been a member, years ago, but had let his membership lapse. Did I like it?

"Oh yes," I said. "Excellent."

Afterwards we drank a bottle of red *Sancerre* wine, before going to the whorehouse.

Although we had just finished breakfast, no, it was time to eat again. Because lunch takes so long in France, it usually starts very early, sometimes as early as eleven thirty. It was now eleven fifteen, so it was time to get ready.

"What do you want to eat now?" my father-in-law asked. "Before we go see other places."

Our flight to Tel Aviv was not due to depart until the evening, so we had plenty of time.

"Something good," I said.

I vaguely expected to be taken again to some small restaurant, perhaps in the 16e, where all the patrons were old, wore black (and pearls, if they were women), and ate silently and without using the salt shaker. But to my surprise he took me to a boisterous place in the 2e the Jewish quarter, on the Rue des Rosiers.

"Gefilte fish!" he exclaimed, rubbing his hands as we entered. "Like my mother used to make."

Again, to my surprise, he seemed to know quite a number of people, mostly old and wrinkled, and talked to them in a mixture of Yiddish and French. To two of them he brought over a bottle of Carmel Hock, an Israeli wine, again closing his eyes and giving the rapid shake to his head and palms, to indicate that this one was on him.

But coffee we had at the Rue du Temple, in a little patisserie, and also a few little *palmier* cookies. "This, the Jews don't know how to make," he said.

By the time we had finished it was mid-afternoon. As we walked outside, in the narrow street, towards the Bourse (he wanted to show me how they traded, but they had just closed for the day), pigeons fluttered above our heads, their wings making an odd clacking sound. Cars honked. Small yellow scooters flitted among the crawling cars.

We were in the 3e, the most ancient part of the Jewish quarter, also called the Shtetl.

"This," my father-in-law pointed, "is where I had my Bar Mitzvah."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It was a nondescript beige house, with a red grill fence. "Used to be a synagogue. The Nazis made it into an officers' club, with women."

I stared at it. An old hag came out, squinted at us, then spit on the sidewalk.

"Everyone came for the Bar Mitzvah," my father-in-law said, ignoring the old woman. "All the family."

I stared at the beige house.

"From Marseille?" I said.

"I was the firstborn," my father-in-law said, as if this explained it.

Without saying anything else he turned on his heels and pulled me away.

At a little café-tabac near the Place de la Concorde we had a panaché: a mixture of blonde beer and lemonade.

"My father taught me to drink it," my father-in-law said. "Used to make the beer himself, so it was *glatt* Kosher. You like it?"

"Yes," I said.

"My wife, she doesn't like it," my father-in-law said, and ordered another one for me. "But, she's my family now, *nu*."

All afternoon we strolled. My legs were shaking, but I kept on walking. He seemed like a young man. In the Tuilleries Gardens he bought me a cotton candy, as if I was a child.

"So how's work?" he asked me.

I said work was all right.

"You happy?"

"Sure," I lied.

He didn't ask if his daughter was happy. It was her mother's job to ask this.

Three hours before our flight, he said, "Let's go see one more thing, see if it's still there." He snapped his fingers. As if by a miracle, a taxi halted, and we climbed in.

For half an hour we drove north, saying nothing. At a decrepit cobble-stoned side street just beyond the Porte de Clignancourt he told the driver to stop.

"Here," he said, pointing with his hand to a crumbling train station. The old metal signs, rusting, drooped over crooked old rails. It was clearly no longer in use. "They left from here."

I didn't have to ask who had left from here.

"Everybody knew, no one came to give them even a glass of water." He made a half circle with his hand in the air, encompassing the high windows, the grimy rooftops, the hanging laundry. "Nobody," He coughed for a long moment, convulsively.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Then we drove back to the hotel, to pack.

Later that night, on the El Al plane, he said to me, "You take care of her, if something happens, *hein*?"

I said I would.

He went on, "She never lacked, with me, for anything," not making clear whether he was speaking of my wife, or of his. "Everything I could give her, I gave." He was speaking of his wife now.

For a while we were quiet; I think he napped a little. I didn't.

Later still, just after the stewardess asked us to buckle our seat belts (we were about to land at Ben Gurion airport), he suddenly turned to me. "Tell me again, the number. But not loud. In my ear."

As the plane banked, I whispered in his ear the number of the Swiss bank account, very softy.

"Remember!" he said, clutching my hand. "Don't forget!"

"I won't," I said.

The plane banked again, steeply. My father-in-law let go of my hand. Down below, like frozen fields of wheat, the white sand dunes of the Tel Aviv coast shone at me in the future dark.

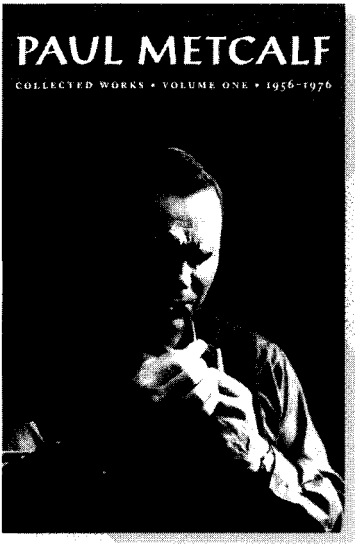
Coming in

Partisan Review:

- H. J. Kaplan: *The Death of Mitterrand*
- Jean-François Sirinelli: Sartre and Aron
- Sonya Rudikoff: *Children of Bloomsbury*
- Stephen Koch: *Anti-Communism's History*
- Louis Sass on Wittgenstein and Freud
- Susan Haack: *Peirce and Rorty*
- Millicent Bell on Doris Lessing
- Stephen Miller: *The Future of Disinterest*
- Aileen Ward: *Blake and His Biographers*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COFFEE HOUSE PRESS



PAUL METCALF

COLLECTED WORKS • VOLUME ONE • 1956-1976
INTRODUCTION BY GUY DAVENPORT

"A unique work of historical and literary imagination, eloquent and powerful."
—Howard Zinn, author of
A People's History of the United States

"Much like his great-grandfather, Herman Melville, Paul Metcalf brings an extraordinary diversity of materials into the complex patterns of analogy and metaphor, to affect a common term altogether brilliant in its imagination." —Robert Creeley

Published in limited editions throughout his career, Metcalf's style crosses many boundaries—a brilliant fusion of poetry, fiction, history, ecology, anthropology, and ethnography.

Volume I contains *Will West,* an almost conventional novella; *Genoa,* his breakthrough masterpiece; *Patagoni* extends Metcalf's concerns to South America; and in *The Middle Passage* he describes Africans leaping overboard, determined to die free rather than live as slaves. Volume I closes with *Apalache,* an elegiac tribute to the lost beauty of America's eastern seaboard and mountains.

Metcalf has created an entirely new way of writing to present his vision of his lifelong subject, the New World. The result is an innovative and unique presentation and interpretation of our American heritage and an incredibly intense read!

$35.00, HARDCOVER • 600 PAGES • ISBN 1-56689-050-0
*VOLUME II (MAY 1997) AND VOLUME III (NOVEMBER 1997)

Available at fine bookstores or send Visa/MC personal check (add $3.00 handling) to:
Coffee House Press, 27 North Fourth Street, Suite 400, Minneapolis, MN 55401.
PH: 612-338-0125 Write for free catalog!
Distributed by Consortium Book Sales & Distribution (800-283-3572).

WHERE GOOD BOOKS ARE BREWING

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Poems

Mark Strand

The Delirium Waltz

I cannot remember when it began. The lights were low. We were walking across the floor, over the polished wood, the inlaid marble, through shallow water, through a dusting of snow, over the shapeless figures of fallen light. I cannot remember, but I think you were there – whoever you were – sometimes with me, sometimes watching. Shapes assembled themselves and dissolved. The hall to the ballroom seemed endless, and a voice, perhaps it was yours, was saying we'd never arrive. Now we were gliding over the floor, our clothes were heavy, and the music was slow. I thought we might die all over again. And I think we were happy. Large constellations of sound were leading us on. We moved in the drift of innumerable notes, abstractions and histories, and as we passed over the ground it formed for us the shape of the earth. We moved toward the future, or was it the past? Anxiety has its inflections – wasteful, sad, and sometimes tragic – but here it had none; in its harmless, cloudlike hovering it was merely fantastic, the sweet result of a musical will. We kept on dancing. And I was with you. Why else would I practice those near calamitous dips? I think it was clear that we'd always been dancing, always been eager to enter the rhythms and transports of light. The attractions of motion were were forever asserting themselves – from the beguiling fluff of clouds to the wink of an eye. Rooms became larger and finally dimensionless, and we kept turning, arriving and turning.

And then came Bob and Sonia
And the dance was slow
And joining them now were Chip and Molly
And Joseph dear Joseph was dancing and smoking

And the dance was slow
And into the hall years later came Tom and Em
And Joseph dear Joseph was dancing and smoking
And off to the side were Mark and Jean leaning together

And into the hall years later came Tom and Em
Holding each other and turning and turning
And off to the side were Mark and Jean leaning together
And Bill and Sandy and Jorie and Jim

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Holding each other and turning and turning
Then came Jules tall and thin
And Bill and Sandy and Jorie and Jim
Everyone moving everyone dancing

Then came Jules tall and thin
Across the wide floor
Everyone moving everyone dancing
Harry was there and so was Kathleen

Across the wide floor
Looking better than ever came Jessie and Steve
Harry was there and so was Kathleen
And Peter and Barbara had just gotten back

Looking better than ever came Jessie and Steve
Leon and Judith Muffie and Jim
And Peter and Barbara had just gotten back
And others were there

Leon and Judith Muffie and Jim
And Charlie and Helen were eating and dancing
And others were there
Wearing their best

And Charlie and Helen were eating and dancing
And Glenn and Angela Wally and Deb
Wearing their best
Around and around dancing and dancing

And our shadows floated away beneath us towards the sunset and darkened the backs of birds, and blackened the sea whose breath smelled slightly of fish, of almonds, and of rotting fruit. A blizzard of coastal aromas had come to collect our attention, and we drifted through all it tried to impart, not knowing where we were going. And soon the air was soiled with dust and iris-colored clouds. We were standing, watching everyone else afloat on the floor, on the sea of the floor, like a raft of voices. "Hi there," they said, as they sailed by, "may we have this dance?" And off they vanished into another room with pale blue walls and birds.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And one room led to another
And birds flew back and forth
People roamed the veranda
Under the limbs of trees

And birds flew back and forth
A golden haze was everywhere
Under the limbs of trees
And Howie was there with Francine

A golden haze was everywhere
And Jeannette and Buddy were dancing
And Howie was there with Francine
Angels must always be pale they said

And Jeannette and Buddy were dancing
And Roz and Denis were talking
Angles must always be pale they said
But pale turns round to white

And Roz and Denis were talking
Saying that blue slides into black
But pale turns round to white
And Jules was there in heels

Saying that blue slides into black
Rosanna was there and Maria
And Jules was there in heels
And day and night were one

Rosanna was there and Maria
And Rusty and Carol were there
And day and night were one
And the sea's green body was near

And Rusty and Carol were there
And Charles and Holly were dancing
And the sea's green body was near
Hello out there hello

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And Charles and Holly were dancing
So thin they were and light
Hello out there hello
Can anyone hear out there

And the rush of water was suddenly loud as if a flood were loosed upon the ballroom floor. I seemed to be dancing alone into the absence of all that I knew and was bound by, the sight of the sea coming close, the spread of solvency, the smear, the blurred erasure of differences, the end of self, the end of whatever surrounds the self. All that I saw was a vast celebration of transparence, a clear dream of nothing. And I kept on going. The breakers flashed and fell under the moon's vacant gaze; scattered petals of foam shone briefly, then sank in the sand. It was cold, and I found myself suddenly back with the others. The sea, that vast ungraspable body, that huge and meaningless empire of water, was left on its own.

They drifted over the floor
And the silver sparkled a little
Oh how they moved together
The crystals shook in the draft

And the silver sparkled a little
So many doors were open
The crystals shook in the draft
Nobody knew what would happen

So many doors were open
And there was Eleanor dancing
Nobody knew what would happen
Now Red waltzed into the room

And there was Eleanor dancing
And Don and Jean were waiting
And Red waltzed into the room
The years would come and go

And Don and Jean were waiting
Hours and hours would pass
The years would come and go
The palms in the hallway rustled

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hours and hours would pass
Now enter the children of Em
The palms in the hallway rustled
And here were the children of Tom

Now enter the children of Em
There was nothing to do but dance
And here were the children of Tom
And Nolan was telling them something

There was nothing to do but dance
They would never sit down together
And Nolan was telling them something
And many who wished they could

Would never sit down together
The season of dancing was endless
And many who wished they could
Would never be able to stop

I cannot remember when it began. The lights were low. We were walking across the floor, over the polished wood, the inlaid marble, through shallow water, through a dusting of snow, over the shapeless figures of fallen light. I cannot remember, but I think you were there, whoever you were.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

James Tate

Different Kinds of Embroidery

Many queens were famous for their needlework.
You can do it at home, but I, for one, never do.
Flat, linked, buttonhole and knot stitches –
it can be a way of writing down history.
If a certain cow is sick, stitch a sick cow
and people will remember it. Or a loved one's
birthday, or a visit from the twins
on their new bicycles – hey, it's your needle.
Aprons, napkins, tablecloths, towels, potholders,
all these can be embroidered, and curtains, blouses.
But for the more ambitious needle jockey
the bedspread and the tapestry offer a more ample canvas.
Let us not forget the Bayeaux Tapestry, which shows
the Norman Conquest of England in the 11th Century. I wouldn't mock
those of you who think
a border of pink tea roses perfect for a spread,
however I am inclined to favor visions –
ravens afire with emeralds for eyes,
vistas Magellan would shrink from,
smoke and fire and fog, addleheaded warthogs,
serpents that seem to go on forever,
secrets not to be fathomed,
a chaos of threads and colors,
vast dust clouds and flying horses,
balloonrides that last for centuries,
armies of assassins bedizened by hummingbirds,
or ululating housewives growing horns in the dark smocking –
a bedspread, in short, that insists you forget
everything else, rain on the rooftop and phone ringing,
that is embroidery of the highest power, strong and inexhaustible and
without rival.
I disremember that sick cow on the bicycle.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Deborah Tall

Bog

(in the West of Ireland)

A bold child is a punished child.

Women guard the hearth, their men
waist-deep in water holes

nick roots, unearth

pearled oak, antlers, ordinary
turf –
rot's dark accumulation.

Muck is luck. It comes loose
as sod, runs deep
as conviction.
It grows
by not living, by failing
to circulate.

Its mother tongue
is water.
Nowhere to flow.

J. S. Venit

Portraits

The feet are firmly planted on the ground
which has long since vanished under water

And the hands learn to distinguish what
is calm from what is simple, and suddenly
present it the way here is not here but
may be idly clasped as the evening resumes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tonight the child unexpectedly appears
beside you pressing against the park
with the glass leaves of stars shining back
from the pool of their own achievements
like the edge of a secret into which we
plan, one day, to fall awake and revive

without reservations like the sky that
describes you in a fresh sweep of beige
what won't tear or grow old so that tomorrow
what the birds sing is already behind them.

Ode to Waiting

One describes the relief of simply
arriving just to breathe its opinions
under the trees. As if one could wait,
not wait, and so one waits. The hours
slide by like distant fingers and still
too many remain. Does it matter if their
thirst is now the part of today that spells
infinity and could leave a place for us
naming something so pure you will vanish
acknowledging the direction it suddenly
takes.
The birds have come back to falsify
all that, one of them coyly explains
passing in front of the trees as it
moves past the window, past caring if
darkness returns with its crowds. The
fields turn plural, the day you are here
becomes important. A detail on the broken
edge of the horizon melts the warm eraser
and to drown in that sea is almost sweet
like sleep.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stuart Dischell

Several Dioramas, Some Remembered, Some Invented, From The Musée Grevin

Napoleon appears so lonely on his island
The painted sea and sky on the floor and wall
Behind him convey to the viewer great tragedy.
The fierceness in the little man's eyes
Below the edge of his three cornered hat
Evokes the woundedness of the truly misunderstood.

The victories at Iena and Austerlitz
The coronation at Notre Dame
The woman and the pond swan
He will never see again
From the window at Malmaison.

The royal children in their servant's chamber,
Gold concealed beneath girdles and britches,
Tempt us to weep at their ill fortune –
As from the dull notes on the hidden speaker
The drop chop of the guillotine is not an imagined
Rhythm of their final deprivation.

The Sun King is displeased.
He worries for his steeds' steeds' steeds;
Sitting on a golden throne
In the formal garden
He has made a Versailles of Heaven.

And here is the waxworks of childhood fear.
A man and a woman face separate directions.
They look cold and rigid as polished columns.
The child in the arch tries to pull them together,
(Or are they pulling him apart, is that the situation?)
St. Hippolytus with a more familiar resemblance.

Now that we have borne witness
To the slaughter of the innocents
We may leave this darkened cellar.
Hold tight the handrail
Upstairs we walk upon the moon.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

T. Carmi

Songs (and Simulations) Against My Will

1.
There's a pretty good chance it'll come back,
the oncologist said,
and he didn't mean the Messiah.

But a bit of nerve goes a long way,
high prices get only higher,
youth will insult its elders, etc. . .

But maybe . . . after all?
Maybe he's trying to get
the lips of the sleeping cash
dispenser to speak?

Maybe he's lying in one of the alleys
with his starving donkey –
the donkey braying, and the wretch wakened?

2.
It's only thanks to forgetfulness
we live our lives,
and they're our lives only thanks to memory.

3.
Now I'm a lodging house:
vacant, up to now,
up to this minute, this second,
but it's pretty clear it will
be all booked up.

What to do in the meantime:
leave the light on in the hall?
make the beds?

A time to remember
(the taste of coffee)
and a time to forget
(the taste of ashes)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a time to die
(for come it will)
and a time to die
(for it's come).

4.
Plea for Pardon

On every mortal brow the mark of *Ayn*
is stamped, the mark unseeable,
sealed, concealed, its ink invisible
only time will know how to make plain.

Growing gradually the brow is raised
to fathers and, in inocence, to sons,
to the night's and day's beloved ones,
as though the sign were not in ambuscade.

Bitter drops of brimstone and of rain –
an unctious tongue from which saliva drips –
and mostly tears, bitter tears that burn

will extricate the writing from the flesh,
bring it to light, and to your loving lips
that will taste its aftertaste of ash.

5.
Today I found out I'm terminal.

Turning Sufi – no –
addict, ascetic, austere.

Terrible sabre – no –
a winding and blinding glitter.

No ternate or sword-toothed scarlet
gladiolus, curving flower.

And no terrible storm or tempest –
wind's nullifying, purifying power.

But terminal.
A term to me.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

6.
(Last Days)

The strawberry's redder than it was.
The apple's greener than it was.
The banana's yellower than it was.

The white plate with the blue rim
shines like a sapphire.

What dance stands still in the white and the blue!

What fragrance lies dormant in the fruit!
(If ever dented with a bite.)

7.
Sir Can, a jackal, dropped in at my house.
Didn't wipe the mucous from his nose.
Didn't dry his damp paws,
no ring, no hello,
came in with dawn
his belly swelling from howling,
his eyes dripping night.

Now nobody can go in or out.
I've got to tell all and sundry, Jack and Jill,
that a jackal, Can – Sir – dropped in at my house.

8.
Simulation

Slowly I'm turning into an eagle.
The glory of my head is falling.

Alas, what happened to us,
what will happen to us,
where are we going?

To that place we were supposed to be in
from the beginning.
Naked (and hairy) I came,
naked (and bald) I'll leave.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I bequeath to the world
such and such a number of poems
and a tuft of hair for grafting.

9.
Another Apology: When thou hast done

She trembled.
What could I do?
I covered her.
It's too cold, she said.
I know, I said.
I did what I could,
it was colder than before.
Again I covered her.
Yes, she said, murmuring,
it really was colder than before.

10.
A Bungled Triolet

And I vowed again that I'd write poems no more,
nor scratch myself if any friend should pass.
The consciousness that croaks aloud: alas,

disintegrates, in words of sore distress:
the agonizing body sings: alas,
to the virtues of the righteous and the pure –

alien to me from way before.
That's why I vowed I would write poems no more
nor scratch myself if any friend should pass.

Translated from the Hebrew by Anne Atik

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

C. Dale Young

The Apprentice

Someone should have painted this room,
this studio already filled with shadows
eclipsing canvases in corners

where the grey at room's center
darkens to titanium black.
The oil cloth, nonchalantly draped

over chairs, wooden and deteriorating,
gives them an almost classical air
only a student of sculpture could ignore easily.

Tonight, only this captive block of marble
lights the room, and never before
have I feared it so greatly,

this material so basic and yet so alien
I want to look away but can't.
Never before did I understand the Master . . .

Here, in this room, a man lies
waiting to rise from this marble, unblemished:
Why have I sought the dead among the living?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Brooks Haxton

Seasonal

Over the rose bush smeared with yellow,
Over the maples green and red
With tar spot, like Karposi's, on each leaf,
The Scorpion writhes on the back the local star.
They tangle in each other's claws. The one
Chews off the other's head
By dark, and in the rain the children
Decked out as the dead come
Beg for sweets.

November Seasonal

Crocuses in April broke
their muddy scab of ice,
three drops, three red drops,
swollen each as if to open
into a garnet cup, each
only to be torn
by sleet that day.

The days grown long
grew short. Red
leaves, and everything
they fell among, fell, too.
A dark and an indifferent
cold came making themself
a place with room for us.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dufour Editions

I Have Lots of Heart
Selected Poems

Miguel Hernández

Translated from the Spanish by Don Share

Bilingual Spanish-English Edition

"He is a great master of language...a wonderful poet." – Pablo Neruda

Miguel Hernández is one of the most revered poets in the Spanish-speaking world. From his early writings to his final poems, passionate and bittersweet, his work is a dazzling reminder that force can never defeat spirit, and that courage is its own reward. The poems of Miguel Hernández, written in the midst of our savage century, beam with a gentleness of heart.

Don Share's translations of Miguel Hernández received the PEN/New England Discovery Award for translation. *November paper $18.95*

Modern Irish Poetry
An Anthology

Edited by Patrick Crotty

"This invaluable snapshot of poetry in Ireland today not only includes generous and interesting selections from the central figures...but also harbors the work of vital poets not known as well in the States."– *Publishers Weekly.* Forty-seven poets are represented to present readers with the very best of Irish poetry since Yeats. *paper $19.95*

The Voronezh Notebooks
Poems 1935-1937

Osip Mandelstam

Translated by Richard & Elizabeth McKane

"[I]t is a great gift to be able to read these 90 poems together and complete in English for the first time.... They form a wrenching diary of 'iron tenderness' and doomed, penetrative brilliance."—*Publishers Weekly* *paper $16.95*

Paul Muldoon
Tim Kendall

Dufour presents the first full-length book on the life and work of this outstanding poet. Tim Kendall's study was specifically written as a detailed and accessible introduction to an artist whose poetry often brings peculiar difficulties. *cloth $29.95*
paper $14.95

Available at your bookstore or directly from:
Dufour Editions, PO Box 7, Chester Springs, PA 19425-0007
TEL 1-800-869-5677 FAX 610-458-7103

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

Unbearable Truths

ALBERT SPEER: HIS BATTLE WITH THE TRUTH. By Gitta Sereny. Alfred A. Knopf. $35.00.

Providence moves in mysterious ways. Albert Speer was Hitler's favorite architect, commissioned before the war to transform Berlin into "Germania," a grandiose capital worthy of the German Empire. Having become one of Hitler's intimates, he was given an additional task during the war. Appointed Reichsminister in February 1942, he achieved the revitalization of Germany's armament industry, in part by assembling a huge slave labor contingent. (Under Speer's ministry, according to one researcher, close to 4,800,000 foreign workers were recruited or torn from their homes.) If he had been condemned to hang – a fate meted out by the Nuremberg Tribunal to Sauckel, in charge of Labor Allocation within his ministry – posterity would have lost valuable information about the highest circles of the Third Reich. Denying all awareness of the terrible conditions in the labor and concentration camps, and portraying himself as an administrator who was privy to neither Hitler's plans for war nor, later on, murderous actions in the East against the Jews, Poles, and Russian POWs, Speer escaped the gallows and received a twenty-year sentence.

Before his release in 1966, Speer smuggled twenty-five thousand letters out of Spandau Prison, and before his death in 1981 published three books on the Third Reich. Gitta Sereny, in her seven-hundred and fifty-page biography, also makes use of many unpublished documents, including Speer's letters after his release, and his report for the allies on Hitler's entourage. She does not neglect the extant literature, but draws liberally on her three years of extensive interviews with Speer, supplemented by those with his friends, former friends, his attorney at Nuremberg and family members.

Despite the mass of data Sereny collects in order to recreate Speer's milieu – especially interesting is her account of life close to Hitler in the Führer's mountain retreat, the Berghof – her masterful synthesis never loses its focus. The truth referred to in Sereny's title is Speer's knowledge of Hitler's criminal designs, in particular the inhuman treatment of the foreign labor force and the extermination of the Jews. The word "struggle" carries, however, some pathos; and readers may not be as sym-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pathetic as the author is to the picture of Speer struggling with the truth or, more precisely, against denial.

Speer's change begins in the last months of the war, when he realizes the true character of the man he served blindly and too well, as Hitler tries to take Germany down with him, ordering a scorched-earth policy everywhere, including in his own country. Speer resists and even countermands Hitler's attempt. Like so many Germans, he had identified Germany with Hitler but now is forced to save Germany from him. Yet Sereny's book is mainly about his claim not to have known what one of her chapter titles names "The Unbearable Truth."

There are actually two such truths, closely related: the systematic and partially executed extermination of the European Jews, and the evil nature of Hitler ("the horror in him that now stands revealed," in Speer's own words). Forced to face the facts at Nuremberg, the result was shock and total disenchantment. "Nothing can compare to the intensity of his feelings for Hitler, of their relationship," Speer's long-time and still loyal secretary told Sereny. And she associates herself and all Germans with that intensity and its betrayal:

> "[I]f Hitler had this solution of the 'Jewish question' in mind from the start, if *that* solution could ever *enter* his mind, then everything he was and did was an abuse of our confidence, our loyalty, our faith. Because then there was *never* any national integrity, any nobility in the movement, in the sense in which we believed we were living it. My God," she said, "if this was in his mind," she stopped and went on, "then there was *never* anything pure about it. It means that we were betrayed to the very depths of our beings."

I have quoted this "ordinary German" (my allusion is to Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust,* which is often an important counterstatement to Sereny) because Sereny's book is preoccupied with the question of what Speer, and Germans generally, knew about the fate of the Jews. She presents pages upon pages of testimony to the effect that, unbelievably, Germans from all ranks and professions, while often aware of the persecutions in Germany itself, had no knowledge of the systematic killings by shooting and gassing in the East. She even remains unsure how much Speer knew *before* Himmler's infamous speech to Nazi leaders at Posen in October 1943. It disclosed that not only were Jewish men being systematically murdered but also all women and children. Speer was in Posen on the day Himmler gave the speech, but claimed (backed up by affidavits from friends) that he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had left before the incriminating talk. After weighing all the evidence Sereny decides: "There is simply no way Speer can have failed to know about Himmler's speech, whether or not he actually sat through it."

Despite telling the Nuremberg court that he had never visited a labor camp, Speer did inspect Dora, one of the most hellish, in August 1943. This camp, set up to manufacture rockets, was under the total control of the SS, having been set up by agreement with Himmler. The latter undertook, Sereny writes, "to guarantee complete secrecy about the rocket production if the work would be entirely produced by concentration camp prisoners, all of whose contact with the outside world would be eliminated." Sixty thousand men were deported to Dora, of whom thirty thousand died. Speer was "appalled" by what he saw there, and ordered the building of a barracks outside the tunnel – which the workers up to that time had never left.

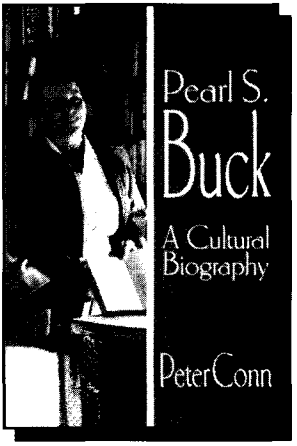
But the mystery remains of how Speer could have hidden from the truth for so long – a mystery which implicates, of course, many other Germans, ordinary or in high places. Sereny records in meticulous detail Speer's continuous self-examination and self-exculpation. Insofar as this correct but cold man shows any emotion, it is concerning the Final Solution. There is no evidence that he harbored strong anti-Semitic feelings: no remarks escaped him in this regard, and, just as he seemed not to care about the political opinion of his employees, he allowed several persons with partial Jewish ancestry to work in enterprises he controlled. In all his books, interviews, and letters he identifies Nuremberg as the place which revealed the truth and shocked him profoundly.

Yet Speer's awakening, which continues during the prison years, remains a limited one. The position of this skewed genius, whom I am tempted to see as the prime specimen of an educated and professional class in Germany that actively collaborated with the Nazi regime, is that he must share responsibility for what happened, but if guilt means prior intent and knowledge, he is not guilty except by taking that guilt on himself. He does, after Nuremberg, denounce Hitler as a criminal, yet the nearest he comes to admitting direct knowledge of the Holocaust is in an affidavit sent in 1977 to a South African Jewish organization to help it fight revisionism. "To this day," he affirms, "I still consider my main guilt to be my tacit consent [*Billigung*] to the persecution and the murder of millions of Jews."

Sereny entitles her last chapter "The Great Lie," for the evidence that Speer must have known about the Shoah is overwhelming. Through his capacity to blind himself, all the more astonishing in one endowed with enormous intelligence and administrative genius – he was said to "see around corners" and he survived both court intrigue and counterproduc-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Literary Lives from Cambridge



Pearl S. Buck

A Cultural Biography

Peter Conn

"At last! A fascinating biography of Pearl S. Buck, vividly written, vigorously researched....a gripping, stunning read."

—Blanche Wiesen Cook, author of *Eleanor Roosevelt*

"...this brilliantly conceived biography...steers a sympathetic yet intelligently balanced course, revealing in fascinating detail the gripping life story of a compelling woman."

—Publishers Weekly

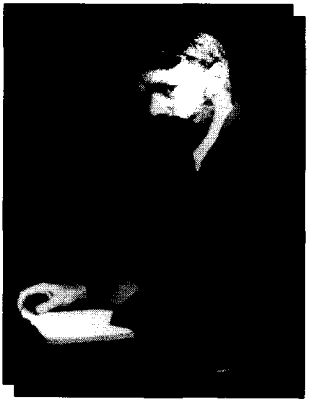
Pearl S. Buck was one of the most renowned, interesting, and controversial figures ever to influence American and Chinese cultural and literary history—and yet she remains one of the least studied, honored, or remembered. In this richly illustrated and meticulously crafted narrative, Conn recounts Buck's life in absorbing detail, tracing the parallel course of American and Chinese history. This "cultural biography" thus offers a dual portrait: of Buck, a figure greater than history cares to remember, and of the era she helped to shape.

56080-2 Hardback $29.95

D. H. Lawrence

Volume 2: Triumph to Exile 1912-1922

Mark Kinkead-Weekes



The volume opens with Lawrence and Frieda Weekley going to Germany. In his baggage was a draft of *Sons and Lovers*. He was to revolutionize English fiction in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. We see the forging of a marriage, the 'un-Englishing' of Lawrence through living abroad, his opposition to the war and the adverse reception of his work. Professor Kinkead-Weekes traces the illuminating relations between man and writing (without confusing life and art) and his sexuality, health, quarrels and friendships.

25420-5 Hardback $39.95

Available in bookstores or from

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

40 West 20th Street, N.Y., NY 10011-4211.
Call toll-free 800-872-7423.
Web site: http://www.cup.org
MasterCard/VISA accepted. Prices subject to change.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tive decisions by Hitler himself – Speer was able to continue his work with zest and to prolong the war, according to some estimates, by an entire year.

I am both fascinated and put off by the author's skillful *mise-en-scène* of a great white-collar criminal. By quoting generously from interviews and using Speer's personal correspondence, by seeing even the period of power and Führer adoration through the lens of such later, sensitive and self-reflective documents, Sereny restores the human qualities of a cold and authoritarian personality, whose name, according to the ancient curse, should have been erased rather than consolidated by this *tombeau*.

Since Speer did lie and saved his neck by that fact, why do we need a book so massive and careful, indeed caring about him? The evidence against Speer, together with his main line of defense, could have been presented in a much more efficient, hard-hitting way. (The matter recalls the difference between Churchill and the Americans on war criminals: Churchill wanted to take a dozen or so of the worst and summarily shoot them; the Americans, in particular, insisted on a judicial proceeding.) Sereny gives Speer every chance to explain himself; she also seeks out the testimony of friends, coworkers, subordinates, and even those who drifted away from him. Every conversation is personalized, the arrangement leading up to it and the (usually elegant) setting in which it takes place are specified, and the flow of what is said – pauses, emotional breaks or eddies – all contribute to a sense that everything here is part of the truth. Something quietly aesthetic or redemptive, therefore, infuses Sereny's portrait. I am left with the feeling that Speer was an actor rather than an agent: someone destined to fulfill a certain role, someone sent to make guilt of this kind intelligible.

Could the author have fallen under Speer's spell to a certain extent? Does she, like Raphael Geis, who was imprisoned for a time in Buchenwald, and (quite improbably) became Speer's spiritual advisor, yearn for a forgiving kind of closure or even reconciliation? Is it possible that she leans, when all is said and done, toward Speer's strategy at Nuremberg of depicting an idealistic Germany that was hoodwinked by Hitler and the extreme patriotism he aroused?

These possibilities pass through one's mind. They may be, of course, defensive reflexes of a reader impatient with Sereny's skillfully interwoven documentary plethora, "the many voices [that] . . . have to be heard," her respect for what Geis called the difficulty of categorizing human beings. The thing that is certain is that Sereny's biography shows in its very texture and method what was lacking in Speer: a compassionate use of intellectual power. Though the book is too long, it is valuable as the por-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trait of a person who, like Hitler himself, could only use that intellect instrumentally, and was virtually incapable of combining it with love. Moral and emotional incompetence, Sereny suggests, characterized both Hitler and Speer. In Speer's case, there were occasional breakthroughs, including "the tie to Hitler, the deepest – perhaps the only real – emotion he had ever felt."

I would like to supplement Sereny's focus on what Speer knew about the Holocaust by raising a related and equally difficult issue: what do we learn from this book about the motivation of the perpetrators or highly placed civilian leaders? The axiom of the humanistic biographer, "Nothing human is alien to me," comes under severe pressure when applied to those responsible for crimes against humanity. The reason is that these crimes rebuff the quality of understanding that characterizes a biography like Sereny's. To understand such crimes, to find a motivation for them which still conforms to the idea of humanity we constantly propose to ourselves, is not possible. Either we change that idea, and call ourselves something else, give ourselves a different species-image, or we retain that image, outlaw the crime, and renounce a humanistic approach to it – that is, the possibility of benefiting from seeking to understand it. In that sense, there is no "legitimacy of forbidden knowledge," and Justice Jackson was right when he declared at Nuremberg: "The real complainant at [this] bar is Civilization."

The following typical Himmler statement made in 1943 to the Hitler Youth is all too clear as doctrine or ideology yet falls outside of our concept of what is human by its absolute refusal to consider the humanity of the victims. It declares in the name of a cultural ideal and the struggle for national survival that we can withdraw from designated populations all understanding and compassion:

> Whether [Eastern] nations live in prosperity or starve to death interests me only insofar as we need them as slaves for our culture, otherwise it is of no interest to me. Whether ten thousand Russian females drop from exhaustion while digging an antitank ditch or not interests me only insofar as the antitank ditch for Germans is completed.

Basically everything human is alien to Himmler except the Aryan *Volksgemeinschaft*, and so all others can be wasted as a means toward achieving German hegemony. Even were it to be shown that a statement like this falls within the range of intelligibility – by citing Vico's principle that whatever human beings do ("history") can be understood by them –

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I would still consider it tainted knowledge, like that derived from inhuman experimentation on humans.

The reflections gathered in Sereny's book about Hitler's charisma, hypnotized German trust, and the power of denial or "determined ignorance" – in Speer personally, with his extraordinary capacity to compartmentalize, but even at Führer Headquarters generally – these certainly convey a kind of illumination and may be useful to strengthen foresight and post warning signs about future behavior. But in terms of what *motivated* the inhuman doctrinal actions of the Nazis and their followers, we remain in darkness. Sereny's search for a knowledge to prevent further outbreaks of genocide cannot do more than show the banality of the perpetrators – moral weakness given stature by power. When Speer admits he was blind by choice to the deportation of the Jews from Berlin, and concerned only with making sure his department's interest in their property would be respected, she adds:

> Speer had always loathed bureaucrats and despised their greed, but they were a marginal concern for him, as was the persecution of the Jews. The sad truth is that he didn't care about the Jews then, any more than he would later care about the millions of forced laborers who slaved for him. When he needed something, he went after it, irrespective of human cost.

That is clear enough, but what kind of a "truth" is it? Why doesn't she simply turn in disgust from this ruthless, opportunistic, if brilliant, mind?

Consider also how Sereny motivates Himmler's speech to SS officers and other leading national and provincial officials assembled at Posen by speculating

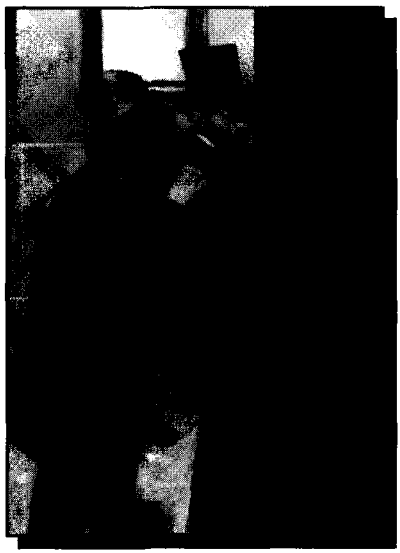
> [Hitler] charged Himmler with making the most faithful in the party privy to guilty knowledge.
>
> Himmler's orders from Hitler *would have been* to draw everyone in the upper ranks of Nazis into the net, so that no one could henceforth dare to break ranks, claiming innocence or ignorance. (italics added)

All the leaders, she suggests, were to be trapped, like Speer was, into a life-long lie (*Lebenslüge* is Alexander Mitscherlich's characterization) by this disclosure.

The glimpsed motivations, then, are banal as well as pernicious; and we cannot, I have argued, discover deeper ones by way of empathy or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"...sharp, elegant, morally insistent."*



T. S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form

Anthony Julius

"Julius...a Ph.D. in literature as well as a lawyer, turns out to be a relentless prosecutor, a deep-digging scholar and a powerful literary critic."

—*Jack Kroll,* Newsweek

"...a painstakingly researched and fiercely argued volume... Julius has forced us to rethink some of our most fundamental, received ideas about art, ideas that for years protected Eliot from the sort of scrutiny found in these pages. He has made us reconsider the fences we routinely construct between the aesthetic and ideological impulses, the old-fashioned belief that poetry 'discloses essential truths' about the world, our eagerness to forgive artists their moral failings, and, most notably our inclination (or desire) to believe that art redeems. He has written an important—and long overdue—book."

—*Michiko Kakutani,* The New York Times

"Julius's argument about the poems in *Ara Vos Prec* seems to me unassailable: they are poetry and they are anti-Semitic, and the two qualities have a place within a very specific tradition of anti-Semitic literary thought. His claim that anti-Semitism casts a shadow on Eliot's writing after 1922 is right as well. And in the end, even his refusal to concede grounds to exculpatory arguments seems just. For indifference is not defense."

—*Louis Menand,* The New York Review

*** The New Yorker**

58673-9 **Paperback** **$18.95**

Available in bookstores or from

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

40 West 20th Street, N.Y., NY 10011-4211.
Call toll-free 800-872-7423.
Web site: http://www.cup.org
MasterCard/VISA accepted. Prices subject to change.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

humanistic research. The imputed reason for Himmler's speech must be distinguished, moreover, from the rationalization of the Judeocide in his speech. Though criminal knowledge can be used to intensify bonding or complicity, the secret divulged by Himmler points to the relation of knowledge and power, not knowledge and guilt. It is as if this forbidden knowledge were empowering in itself, as if it promised the bearers of the secret that "ye shall become as Gods."

An important essay by Saul Friedlander, "On the Unease in Historical Interpretation," emphasizes that Himmler's explanation of the unlimited killings was instrumentalist only in part (Jewish woman and children might produce a new race of avengers): his sinister disclosures are also characterized by an elation, a sense of sublimity, related directly to "the staggering dimension of the killing . . . the staggering number of victims." The difficulty presented to our understanding is not, then, that the spectacle of power produces a dangerous state of elation – something of that is easily felt when we watch footage of Nazi mass rallies – but that this exaltation is linked in Himmler to a "compelling lust for killing on an immense scale."

Sereny's efforts to turn Speer into a parable are not unjustified, however. For Speer blocked out rather than shared Hitler's inhuman doctrines and orders; and it is this power of denial, never entirely overcome even in his belated struggle against it, which creates the morality tale. That he lived a lie and was an opportunist on a grand scale cannot be redeemed by Sereny's magnanimous treatment. But that this lie should become an unbearable truth is precisely the stuff of which fictions are made. The life-lie and its necessity obsess Ibsen's dramas, while the Oedipus of Sophocles is driven to discover and then assume the guilt of his unconsciously committed crime.

It may be that fiction – though less referential, factual and probative than historical research – can guide us toward a limited form of understanding in this sensitive area of knowing and not-knowing. Its theme is often a traumatic or potentially traumatic self-knowledge, one that cannot reach full consciousness without becoming life-threatening. After reading Sereny I am tempted to think of Speer's *Lebenslüge* in this light: the discovery of a truth that reveals his life to have been a lie, yet a discovery so unbearable – both because of the earlier, blind exhilaration and now the brutal facts – that he is forever an accomplice of that experience. When his daughter Hilda, on her seventeenth birthday, finally asks him directly how he could have been so long part of an evil system, he makes the following reply: ". . . the tasks Hitler had confided to me, first in architecture, then in government, his 'friendship,' the passionate conviction he radiated, the power his favor conferred on me, all this was quite

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

simply overwhelming and had become so indispensable to me that to hang on to it I would probably have swallowed anything."

Speer's struggle with truth comes after a dramatic reversal of knowledge and fortune, but there is no resolution to it as in the Oedipus story. He continues to live in prevarication and partial denial; his unusual intellectual resources go as much to evading the truth as to acknowledging it. What is most affecting in Sereny's book – which does not therefore cease to be historically accurate – is consonant with a conflict familiar to us from some of our most influential works of fiction.

Geoffrey Hartman

Looking Back

THE DREAM THAT FAILED: REFLECTIONS ON THE SOVIET UNION. By Walter Laqueur. Oxford University Press. $25.00.

It used to be said that Western studies of the Soviet system were more informative of political-intellectual trends in the West than of the nature of the Soviet Union. This still appears to be the case today as the attempts to grapple with the unraveling of the USSR continue. The controversies are numerous and intense; the spectacle is a feast for the intellectual historian, as well as for the student of Communist systems. While few anticipated the dissolution of the Soviet empire and the circumstances under which it was to take place, with every passing year more observers maintain that they had thought it was coming all along.

Why was it so widely believed that the Soviet Union was virtually indestructible or, in any event, stable and durable? Probably of all the reasons, the commitment to the superpower symmetry and moral equivalence were the most important. Numerous ancillary beliefs rested on the "two superpowers" scenario. It was for instance widely believed that global stability required the equilibrium between these powers. Credibly critical views of the United States were also anchored in the seemingly objective equation of its shortcomings with those of the Soviet Union; the somewhat cynical, hence apparently impartial wisdom used to be that neither of the superpowers inspired much respect and that each used the other for various nefarious purposes (including "bloated defense budgets" and variously unseemly domestic policies). These viewpoints,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which arose in the 1960s, had become articles of faith among media pundits, academic intellectuals, many members of the liberal middle classes and some politicians in the Democratic Party.

Another important force contributing to the belief in the durability of the Soviet Union was the anti-nuclear and peace movement complex, whose members whipped themselves into a frenzy over the imminence of nuclear holocaust and dedicated their lives, or at least their public lives, to averting the disaster. They were the earnest advocates of grass-roots exchanges with Soviet citizens, the bellicose peace activists, weekend picketers and protestors, militant teachers of peace studies, idealistic church ministers and "concerned" academics for whom the cause of peace and nuclear disarmament (unilateral, if necessary) became an important source of identity. They all had a vested interest in the persistence of the Soviet Union. After all, how could the peace movement flourish without the Cold War? The former needed the latter as much as, if not more than, the CIA and the KGB needed each other.

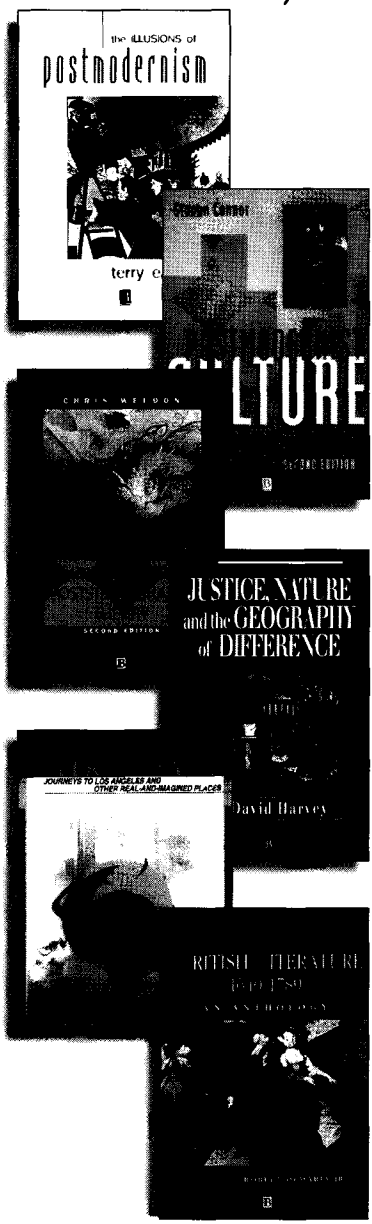
Another group, not large but influential, was made up of academics and other intellectuals who quietly harbored the expectation, after Gorbachev appeared on the horizon, that the Soviet Union might yet realize the great hopes of the October Revolution, reclaim its founding ideals, and become at last a democratic socialist society. They also tended to believe that, notwithstanding its serious flaws, especially in regard to civil liberties, the Soviet Union was on the whole a successful modernizing society.

There were also those deeply (and often hopefully) committed to the idea that the "late capitalist" United States was in rapid decline, that it was the most decadent society on earth, and thus it was obliged to collapse before any other society, including the Soviet one. Few of the critics of capitalism could anticipate or even entertain the idea of the Soviet Union dissolving into its constituent parts and scrambling to create a market economy, thus reversing the Marxian principles of historical progress. There were those among the critics of America (at home and abroad) who believed that the Soviet Union was a crucial counterweight to the predatory imperialism of the United States and did not want to contemplate a world without it. Such wishful thinking also contributed to belief in the durability of the Soviet Union.

Conservative critics of the Soviet Union were no more farsighted in predicting its collapse than those less averse to its prolonged existence – although admittedly many of them noted, from time to time, that the system was bound to collapse sooner or later. The "Cold Warriors" and shamelessly anti-Communist critics of the Soviet system (myself among them) had few illusions about the advantages of Soviet-style socialism

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Illusions, Culture and Space...



The Illusions of Postmodernism

TERRY EAGLETON

DECEMBER 1996 ~ 6 X 9 ~ 130 PAGES
0-631-20323-0 ~ PAPERBACK ~ $15.95
0-631-20322-2 ~ HARDCOVER ~ $44.95

Postmodernist Culture

An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary
Second Edition

STEVEN CONNOR

NOVEMBER 1996 ~ 6 X 9 ~ 304 PAGES
0-631-20052-5 ~ PAPERBACK ~ $20.95

Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory

Second Edition

CHRIS WEEDON

DECEMBER 1996 ~ 6 X 9 ~ 208 PAGES
0-631-19825-3 ~ PAPERBACK ~ $20.95

Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference

DAVID HARVEY

OCTOBER 1996 ~ 6 X 9 ~ 496 PAGES
1-55786-681-3 ~ PAPERBACK ~ $21.95
1-55786-680-5 ~ HARDCOVER ~ $64.95

Thirdspace

Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places

EDWARD W. SOJA

AUGUST 1996 ~ 6 X 9 ~ 352 PAGES
1-55786-675-9 ~ PAPERBACK ~ $20.95
1-55786-674-0 ~ HARDCOVER ~ $69.95

British Literature 1640-1789

An Anthology

Edited by ROBERT DEMARIA

DECEMBER 1996 ~ 6 X 9 ~ 1162 PAGES
0-631-19528-9 ~ PAPERBACK ~ $24.95
0-631-19527-0 ~ HARDCOVER ~ $74.95

BLACKWELL Publishers
Cambridge, MA • Oxford, UK

1-800-216-2522

Visit **BLACKWELL PUBLISHERS ON THE NET** *at: http://www.blackwellpublishers.co.uk*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

over the depravities of capitalism and did not consider the Soviet Union asuccessful modernizing society. Their belief in the durability of the Soviet system had nothing to do with overlooking its flaws (moral, political, or economic), nor were they under the impression that it had enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy despite its shortcomings. Neither did they believe in an implicit "social contract" between the rulers and the rule. They thought that it was durable because it seemed to them, wrongly as it turned out, that the Soviet Union had succeeded in building a system of social-political controls which would sustain it regardless of its economic inefficiency and minimal legitimacy; that the Soviet Union had managed to balance domestic stagnation with expansion abroad and could produce an abundance of weaponry to remain a formidable superpower.

It is clear in retrospect that the conservative critics overestimated the efficiency of the apparatus of control, the political cohesion of the Soviet ruling elites, the commitment of the ruling elites to power, and the elites' ability to manipulate the citizenry regardless of its growing discontents. These critics of the Soviet system also underestimated the subversive impact of increased information about and contact with the West.

The Dream That Failed stands out among the many postmortems of the Soviet system as a concise and illuminating exploration of both the sources for the fall of the Soviet Union and the reasons for the difficulty of predicting it. Not only does Walter Laqueur help to understand the collapse, he also examines critically the theories and controversies which preceded and followed it, putting them into perspective by recalling past controversies in Western and especially American studies of the Soviet system. His book addresses the part played by nationalism in the disintegration, the disputes over the idea of totalitarianism, the collapse of East Germany, and the early Western responses to the rise of the Soviet Union.

After examining a long list of the possible factors contributing to the Soviet fall, Laqueur emphasizes the "crisis of self-confidence" among the rulers, associated with "the growing discrepancy between promise and performance." He suggests, "The collapse of the system came about because of the loss of self-confidence among the rulers: the fact that they put up surprisingly little resistance against the forces challenging them." This is an issue that invites further questions: did their self-confidence diminish because of the poor performance of the Soviet economy or the general stagnation and corruption of the Brezhnev era? Or because they knew more about the West, its technological and other advantages? Because they belonged to a new generation exposed to Khrushchev's de-Stalinization? Because they grew up in a less life-threatening system?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College Celebrates Twenty Years of Teaching Writing

Semesters in our rigorous low-residency program in poetry and fiction begin with a 10-day residency of classes, workshops and lectures on 1,100 acres in the Swannanoa Valley. Join us, and study under the close supervision of outstanding faculty, each of whom works with no more than five students.

Need-based grants, federal loans, and a Holden Minority Scholarship are available.

For more information, call or write Peter Turchi, Director, MFA Program for Writers, PO Box 9000, Warren Wilson College, Asheville NC 28815-9000. (704) 298-3325 x380 FAX (704) 298-1405 http: //www.warren-wilson.edu/mfa

Recent graduates worked one-to-one with

Joan Aleshire
Agha Shahid Ali
Debra Allbery
Andrea Barrett
Charles Baxter
Pinckney Benedict
Marianne Boruch
Robert Boswell
Karen Brennan
Robert Cohen
Michael Collier
Carl Dennis
Stephen Dobyns
Roland Flint
Reginald Gibbons
Ehud Havazelet
Brooks Haxton
David Haynes
Tony Hoagland
Marie Howe
C. J. Hribal
Edward P. Jones
Brigit Pegeen Kelly
Larry Levis
Margot Livesey
Thomas Lux
Michael Martone
Campbell McGrath
Heather McHugh
Christopher McIlroy
Kevin McIlvoy
James McMichael
Pablo Medina
Antonya Nelson
Susan Neville
Steve Orlen
Janet Peery
Mary ElsieRobertson
Richard Russo
Ira Sadoff
Jim Shepard
Joan Silber
Dave Smith
Irini Spanidou
Debra Spark
Darcey Steinke
Peter Turchi
Ellen Bryant Voigt
Chuck Wachtel
Alan Williamson
Eleanor Wilner
Geoffrey Wolff
Renate Wood

Look for Poets Teaching Poets: Self in the World, a collection of essays by our poetry faculty, just published by the University of Michigan Press.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Also notable in this volume are the reflections on the relationship between modernization and the stability of the Soviet system. Unlike numerous revisionist historians who optimistically envisaged the joint and continued modernization *and* liberalization of the Soviet Union, Laqueur recognizes that "modernization, far from helping to resolve those tensions exacerbated them." It might be further argued that insofar as modernization raised expectations, which it certainly did – both material and political – it further undermined the system incapable of meeting them.

Another strength of this book is its critical examination of Western misperceptions of the Soviet Union, all the more worthy of discussion since little soul-searching of any substance has taken place concerning the colorful misreadings of Soviet history and society, and few efforts have been made to understand their sources. Laqueur writes: "Later-day Soviet and Western students of the phenomenon of fellow traveling have had difficulty finding rational explanation. How could sophisticated Western visitors have misjudged the real situation in the Soviet Union so profoundly?" (I have addressed this question substantively in my own book, *Political Pilgrims*.) Laqueur's immense productive energy has yielded a lucid, stimulating, and informative book that radiates a characteristic combination of common sense and insight.

Paul Hollander

Endangered Species?

CONDITIONS OF LIBERTY: CIVIL SOCIETY AND ITS RIVALS. By Ernest Gellner. Allen Lane. The Penguin Press. $27.95.

Can civil societies develop in the countries of the former Leninist ideocracies? What kinds of traditions and practices are required in order to make a vibrant constellation of independent activities from below become the societal counterpart to the emergence of the market economies and the dynamics of multi-party systems? For some political thinkers, the civil society, as it existed in an embryonic form during the stage of post-totalitarianism (or creeping Leninism), has exhausted itself.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At the moment the Communist Party tried to control all walks of life, the construction of what Czech philosopher Vaclav Benda called a "parallel polis," the politics of antipolitics, appeared as the only reasonable way of avoiding full capitulation to the existing power. Now, some think, the time has come to focus on the development of political parties and institutions. Later, they argue, when democracy matures, it will be possible again to expand civil society in a genuinely Western and liberal form. Other authors, among them Ernest Gellner, see civil society as the main force that ruined the political monopoly of the hierocratic regimes and introduced, in a nonviolent, truly civilian way, the values and principles of dialogue and tolerance in the public discourse.

Truly original in its thrust, Gellner's book is an assessment of the main conditions that ensure the success of the idea of civil society in a world where Marxist dogmas have collapsed and new illiberal temptations have emerged. It is not simply an essay on civil society and its glory, but rather a reflection on the disquieting trends that could jeopardize its future in the name of new collectivisms, pseudo-egalitarian chiliasms, and other millennial and salvationist mythologies.

Debates on the topic of civil society and its role in the breakdown of Leninist regimes began in the early 1980s. Andrew Arato, Timothy Garton Ash, Ralf Dahrendorf, John Keane, Jacques Rupnik, Adam Seligman, among others, in the West, and no less important, Vaclav Havel, Janos Kis, Miklos Haraszti, and Adam Michnik in the East, provided major contributions to this discussion. The debate intensified after 1989, when many thinkers started to ponder the validity of the civil society paradigm in dealing with the tensions and vulnerabilities of the post-Leninist protodemocracies. Lately, the debate has extended into the analysis of the relationship between civil society and the new governments. Some authors, such as the Hungarian philosopher G. M. Tamas, have come to the conclusion that civil society may be a serious threat to the development and well-functioning of the new liberal order.

For Gellner, a Czech-born, British social anthropologist and political philosopher associated until his death in late 1995 with the Central European University in Prague, the issue does not lend itself to any ambiguity: in his view, inspired by the legacy of Scottish Enlightenment and by Alexis de Tocqueville, civil society is the very name of liberal democracy as it has emerged in the West. It means an open society based on free market, limited government, separation of powers, and accountable institutions: "The simplest formula for Civil Society, then, is political-coercive centralization with accountability, rotation, and fairly low rewards for those manning the political apparatus, and economic pluralism." Civic initiatives create mechanisms of accountability and ensure the dia-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

logue between government and society. In the absence of these constellations of civic initiatives, the state tends to expand its tentacles into the most intimate spheres of private life. Leninist and other non-liberal experiments allow the state to decree whatever the individual should and should not do and think. Civil society tempers the voracious controlling appetite of the government. Furthermore, where civil societies exist and function properly, history is not rewritten each time a change of government takes place.

Gellner does not see civil society fundamentally threatened in its presumed core region, the capitalist West. His concern is primarily the intensification of the antidemocratic passions and emotions in the former colonial countries, in the Middle East, and in Asia. Populist or tribal authoritarianism, in Gellner's view, shared by Daniel Chirot, Kenneth Jowitt, Claude Lefort, and Michael Walzer, among others, has not been completely defeated. It is only the existence of solidly rooted civil societies, based on social trust and a high level of what Robert Putnam defines as social capital, that can moderate the impact of such antiliberal instincts. One cannot dispute the appeals of salvationist-providential myths at the moment societies experience deep economic and social crisis. But even a developed civil society is not the sufficient condition to give the individual the sentiment of belonging to a community, the warmth of group cohesion frequently exploited by the apostles of integral nationalism or religious absolutism. Therefore, there is a need for liberal democracies to develop the virtues of a civic nationalism (Israeli philosopher Yael Tamir has written about liberal nationalism), based on tolerance and inclusion and not on tribal adversities, essentialized differences, and hostility to the very principle of otherness. In a civil society, there is room for alterity, for foreignness, and for the polyphony of opinions, for dissonance. In the closed universe of populist and ethnocentric attachments, loyalty to the values of the in-group strangles the autonomy of individual subjects, massifies and homogenizes them. This trend has been described by Roger Brubaker as the temptation of the nationalizing state.

Gellner sees liberal democracy as a process of continuous rethinking and rebuilding, rather than as a statis, an "end of politics" sanctioned by whatever "logic of history." His book opens with the statement, "A new ideal was born, or reborn, in recent decades: Civil Society." Indeed, if anything novel and enduring has been generated by the revolutions of 1989, it is that they showed it is possible for the idea of a parallel society, freed from government constraints, emancipated from official pressures and committed to affirmation of the values of the autonomous individual, to triumph over bureaucratic-ideological domination. According to Gellner, the project of modernity is marked by the rivalry between three

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

societal types: ideological despotisms, segmentarized-corporatist societies imbued with tribal-atavistic nostalgias, and civil societies (in the sense of Western-style institutionalized pluralism). Democratic pluralism, as it has evolved in the West, is definitely linked to the limitation of governmental attributes and powers. It is only this type of understanding of freedom that can ensure the spontaneity of public life and the exercise of rights against any attempt to impose heteronomy on the individuals. These civil societies are of course imperfect, but their rivals, with their monistic pretense, cannot solve any of the problems they so arduously decry. Civil society negates asphyxiating communalism and centralizing authoritarianism. It encourages parallel and intermediary institutions, the joint actions of individual and collective agents that can prevent governmental sprawl.

The ideal of civil society is thus related to a certain permanence of public values, to the general recognition at the level of "constitutional consensus" of a secular, rationally assumed and non-charismatic image of the public good. Certainly, this vision tends to organize itself through reflexive communication and unencumbered dialogue. Where the "idols of the tribe" dictate loyalties, affinities, and the sense of belonging, there is little room for such a civil society to establish itself. Think of the case of Serbia,where Slobodan Milosevic has managed to postpone and derail the evolution of a civil society by abusing the myth of national unity and exacerbating sentiments of victimhood and providential ethnic destiny. It is thus obvious that civil society cannot find its legitimation in heroic-communitarian nostalgias or in the prerogatives of a mythological "collective moral authority" that tend to incorporate, absorb, and dissolve the individual in the amorphous conglomerate of the "national will." Indeed, if civil society means anything, it is the reclaiming by individuals of their inalienable right to accountable government, to impersonal procedures, and full equality under the law.

But, again, these procedures and norms have developed in the West throughout several centuries, and found their justification in the theory of natural rights. How are they going to evolve in the new democracies of the post-Leninist world, where the pressures of an often ruthless free market can and indeed do often play in favor of mafia-type gangs rather than civic-oriented structures? How can one foster liberal values in societies still beset by ethnic furies, controlled by cynical bureaucrats allied with racketeers and social adventurers? Is there any place for civil society in Europe's Eastern-most and still least democratic time zone? Gellner's book highlights both the obstacles to and the opportunities for building such civil societies in the post-Communist states. I agree with him that even if there are so many hindrances, even if the formal rights are more than once denied and slandered, it remains a fact that the breakdown of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sovietism would not have taken place in the absence of a true and irresistible aspiration among the denizens of these countries toward civil society.

This collective aspiration, Gellner notes, is still in a very incipient stage in the Islamic societies. What needs to occur in East-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union is a reactivation and strengthening of the civic nerve, which has somewhat lost momentum under the siege of nationalist trends. If it was possible for civil society to emerge during the somber days of declining Leninism, the chances to catalyze this project should be infinitely stronger in a climate of democratic debate.

Gellner's book avoids clichés and abstract rhetoric about the demise of Marxism. His understanding of the end of Leninist regimes is both provocative and innovative: according to him, the Marxian gnosis converted into a state religion aimed at fully controlling and eventually redefining not so much the sense of sacrality as its opposite. It was precisely the degeneration of the sacred into a "religion of work" and the systematic aggression against a falsified and mystified profane that became the curse of institutionalized Marxism. The rehabilitation of the profane: this is the meaning of Gellner's call for the restoration and consolidation of a real civil society. This moral and political imperative can be achieved through the non-spectacular, often prosaic and not at all heroic activities associated with civil society. It is precisely civility that can orient profane instincts in a constructive direction.

Civil society recognizes the profane for what it is and refuses to invest it with the qualities of mystical religiosity. In Gellner's words: "Civil Society is above all a society whose order is not sacralized, or rather it is only sacralized wtih ambiguity, irony and nuance." But this call for rationality, this commitment to the desacralizaion of the world and rejection of irrational passions and emotions carries with it a serious danger: the rise of sentiments of despondency, of rootlessness, a yearning for unity and solidarity that are not adequately dealt with in the cold project of liberalism. Not infrequently, these sentiments of frustration, angst, and malaise motivate enrollment in nationalist movements. The ideals of brotherhood, proclaimed by the Marxian faith, have been bankrupted, but nationalism can use its own exclusive and intolerant zeal to substitute for the lost total ideology.

The end of Leninism is well captured by Gellner as part of the ultimate defeat of a certain hubris associated with the Enlightenment's historicism: "After seventy years, the experiment collapsed in a uniquely ignominious manner, unrivalled in history. Party tyrannies and superstitions had their loyalists and true believers; but when Communism crumbled, initially no one raised a hand in its defense. Its adherents

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turned to economic opportunism or to chauvinism and may have regretted their lost stability, but as for their faith, they shed it without any inner struggle. Never was a total faith relinquished with such ease." It is precisely this strange easiness of the breakdown that should not mislead us. The Leninist authoritarian habits of the mind had been deeply internalized. They generated forms of conduct, attitudes, inhibitions, and a general culture of suspicion, enmity, and shame that cannot be so swiftly overcome by uplifting appeals to the virtues of a civil society.

In the end, Gellner himself admits, civil society, with its cold, pragmatic, non-sacramental vision of authority, remains an exceptional construct. And, if it were to inspire collective commitments, it must incorporate in its own project the irradiating power of a political myth. To conclude, if civil society is to have an enduring historical meaning and achieve universality, it has to inspire the compelling vision of a *tertium datur* between the Scylla of communitarian obedience and pseudo-security, and the Charybdis of anarchic, thoughtless individualism.

Vladimir Tismaneanu

Dark Passages

THE YELLOW WIND. By David Grossman. Farrar Straus & Giroux. $17.95.
SLEEPING ON A WIRE. By David Grossman. Farrar Straus & Giroux. $22.00.
SEE UNDER: LOVE. By David Grossman. Farrar Straus & Giroux. $22.95.
SMILE OF THE LAMB. By David Grossman. Farrar Straus & Giroux. $19.95.
THE BOOK OF INTIMATE GRAMMAR. By David Grossman. Farrar Straus & Giroux. $22.00.

David Grossman, the rising star in the firmament of Israeli literature, has had a jumbled career in America. He first came to prominence in 1988 when *The New Yorker* published a long piece of political reportage in which Grossman described encounters with Palestinians during seven weeks of visits to villages and refugee camps in the Occupied Territories. Although the original Hebrew version had appeared before the outbreak of the Intifada in December 1987, the English translation (published as *The Yellow Wind*) appeared afterwards, and it struck readers with the full force of a prophecy fulfilled. On the strength of his political writings, Grossman was brought to America by Peace Now and invited to address large and attentive audiences about the moral horrors of the occupation.

All this took place before much was known here about Grossman the novelist. Grossman's political reporting – he later published a book about

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Arab citizens of Israel called *Sleeping on a Wire* – is observant and sensitive and above all "writerly" in its use of vignette and character sketch. But Grossman's political books do not cover new ground, even if they succeed in making the plight of their subject affecting. They redouble the sense of tragedy without offering much clear-headed thinking about difficult choices and modes of accommodation.

As a novelist, however, Grossman is a great innovator who has pushed his genre in productive postmodernist directions and who has not been afraid to engage big issues left untouched by other Israeli writers. Grossman's claim to greatness as a novelist rests chiefly on the achievement of his second novel *See Under: Love,* a daring work about the Holocaust that was published in 1985 in Israel, before *The Yellow Wind,* but brought out in translation in America in 1989, only after his political writing had established his reputation. To add to the confusion, Grossman's first novel, *Smile of the Lamb,* an only partially successful story about Jewish-Arab relations during the occupation of the West Bank, came out here well after *See Under: Love* was already in the hands of American readers.

Setting the record straight on Grossman's publishing history is not as pedantic as it sounds. Grossman's reception in America was in a sense kidnapped by the success of *The Yellow Wind. The Yellow Wind* went down easily, much in the manner of the kind of *New Yorker* reporting that informs us about distant afflictions while confirming our previously held moral convictions. While Israeli readers knew that this was Grossman journalizing between novel projects, American readers were unprepared for the ambitiousness and difficulty of Grossman's big Holocaust novel when it was belatedly placed before them.

With the exception of the work of Aharon Apelfeld, Israeli literature has avoided the subject of the Holocaust, because, among other reasons, the destruction of European Jewry presented too shameful a contrast to the heroic ethos of Zionism. Grossman's *See Under: Love* was the first major novel by a younger writer to engage the Holocaust directly. The novel's appearance was all the more remarkable because Grossman is not a child of survivors and does not belong to the so-called phenomenon of the "Second Generation," writers and artists, like Art Spiegelman in *Maus,* whose work is compelled by the need to work through a relationship with survivor parents. Yet despite (or, who knows, perhaps because of) this lack of personal connection, the first ninety pages of *See Under: Love* are the most stunning piece of Holocaust literature I have read in any language. They tell the story of a nine-year-old boy named Momik who lives with his survivor parents in Jerusalem and tries desperately to undo the horrible effects of the Holocaust on his family. The parents'

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

characteristic refusal to speak openly of their experiences in the camps is matched by Momik's determined attempts to collect and decode their occasional unguarded references to what the "Nazi Beast" did to them "Over There." Taking their references seriously, the boy sets out trapping various small animals in his neighborhood in the hope of identifying the Nazi beast that is imprisoning his parents and delivering them from its clutches. Grossman's strategy of sticking to the literalizing imagination of the child produces a narrative that is both hilarious and profoundly affecting.

The fantasy of rescue, rooted deeply in the juvenile adventure literature of Jules Vernes and Edgar Allen Poe, remains the matrix for the three other sections of the novel. In the second, Momik grows up to become a writer who tries to save himself from personal and artistic sterility by jumping into the ocean off of Gedansk and swimming alongside the Polish Jewish writer Bruno Schulz, who, rather than being killed by a Nazi officer in the Drohobycz ghetto, became a salmon instead. In the third, Momik tries to deliver his great uncle, a mediocre author of children's stories, from the horror of surviving the murder of his wife and daughter by telling a story that places the uncle – and Momik himself – back in the camps and giving the uncle the chance to tell stories that unhinge the mind of the Nazi commandant. The final section, written in the form of alphabetically arranged encyclopedia entries (hence the title *See Under: Love*) concerns a group of aging child heroes drawn from the pages of the uncle's stories and their failed efforts to save the life of a baby born in the Warsaw ghetto with a disease that condemns him to develop through all the stages of life from birth to death within a period of twenty-four hours.

With this novel Grossman earns his stripes as an adroit practitioner of postmodernism and magic realism. At every turn one meets techniques – Is not derivativeness a postmodernist practice turned into a virtue? – that have been borrowed from contemporary American and European writing: extravagant and absurd narrative settings, violations of the laws of nature, stories within stories, and the abundant recycling of cultural materials. The originality of Grossman's achievement in *See Under: Love* lies in his taking this passel of postmodernist hijinks with its inherent potential for self-canceling triviality and using it in the service of the ultimate seriousness of the Holocaust. Given the means in play, the potential for traducing that seriousness is enormous, yet Grossman manages to make the antic elements neutralize sentimentality and amplify pathos. Particularly impressive is the risk Grossman takes in making the four sections of the novel so wildly different one from the other in style and narrative situation. Yet again, rather than being merely cute or experimental,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Grossman manages to create a network of credible interconnections that give the novel a gathering power as it moves toward its encyclopedic culmination.

The central problem with *See Under: "Love"* as a novel – and a problem that does not go away in his new work – bears on the question of whether stories can redeem reality. At the center of each of the novel's many plots lies the ambition to rescue victims and survivors by constructing their stories and retelling them with a surplus of imaginative invention. The chance given by the narrator to his great uncle to redeem his artistic mediocrity by going back to the past and retelling a set of stories that will unman an SS officer is only one example of a pervasive fantasy of deliverance. Yet rather than firmly setting the fantasy in an ironic perspective, Grossman too often seems charmed by its spell, as if the fertile extravagance of his own story-telling capacity should by rights be able to count for more than it does and work against the unredeemable tragedy of its subject. Grossman's work ends up being caught between parallel convictions: an acceptance of the unyielding difficulty of reality and a belief in the transformative powers of art.

The problem of life and art as parallel lines remains a creative but unresolved tension in *The Book of Intimate Grammar,* Grossman's third novel, which appeared in Israel in 1991 and in the splendid English translation by Betsy Rosenberg in 1994. The novel is unreservedly and unrepentantly presented as a portrait of the artist as a (very) young man, with the requisite gestures to Joyce and other practitioners of the genre. In composing this work of self-portraiture at this particular stage in his career, Grossman is laying claim to his status in Israeli literature as the major novelist of his generation. He is presenting himself as an artist whose realized and potential achievement brings with it the obligation to furnish an autobiographical myth and an account of origins. He is further seeking to widen the scope of his art and to establish the fact that he is not just a fabulist and a narrative pyrotechnician but a writer capable of mounting a realist engagement with the gritty Israeli reality that furnished the inhospitable soil for the growth of his artistic self.

The account of Grossman's origins is noteworthy because it describes a social location which is very different from that of the Israeli writers who preceded them. Whether it was the young veterans of the '48 war like Aharon Megged and S. Yizhar or the New Wave writers like Amos Oz who came to prominence in the sixties and seventies, there was a background held in common, one which was rooted in the ideals of socialist Zionism and powerfully sustained by the solidarity of the youth movement. In contrast, Grossman has his autobiographical protagonist

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Aron Kleinman grow up in a world which is untouched by the passions of ideology and which is as distant from the utopian ethos of the kibbutz as can be imagined. *The Book of Intimate Grammar* is set in Jerusalem in a shikkun, a block of workers' flats built around a central courtyard, the kind of housing familiar to travelers in East Bloc countries. The shikkun is inhabited by laborers, clerks, and shopkeepers who are recent immigrants to Israel from many lands and who, though they are eager fans of the new state's soccer teams and its armies, remain followers fixed in the small-mindedness of their domestic preoccupations. The world of the shikkun is a version of the world of the tenement, and the affinity underscores the fact that *The Book of Intimate Grammar* belongs more to an American and international literature of Jewish immigration – with a particular debt to Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep* – than it does to the traditions of Israeli writing.

Aron's parents, Hinda and Moshe, are at once monstrous and endearing. Raised in Poland, Moshe joined the Red Army out of a youthful enthusiasm for Communism and ended up close to death in one of Stalin's artic prison camps. The price paid for surviving life in the camp and later escaping across the vast reaches of frozen tundra was, simply, becoming an animal, and the gruesome story of what he did to come through is one that Hinda never allows her husband to tell, although it ends up coming out despite her. Hinda meets him when he makes his way to Palestine in 1946, an emaciated, traumatized shell of a human being. She is twenty-six at the time, an unmarried orphan, who is raising her five younger brothers and sisters alone. Hinda brings Moshe into her home, and, during the years of terrible privation brought on by the siege of Jerusalem and the austerity following independence, she slowly succeeds in bringing him back to life. She feeds him, teaches him Hebrew, socializes him and finally marries him. When he sustains a minor injury after years of contented physical labor, Hinda conspires to get him a union desk job, thereby completing the project of his domestication.

In *See Under: Love,* Grossman's Holocaust novel, Momik's parents are survivors whose experiences in the camps have rendered them isolated and paranoid. Aron's parents in *The Book of Intimate Grammar* are also survivors, though survivors of less horrible circumstances. Yet in their case, the enormous energies necessary to come through have not been dissipated but trained on their children. Aron and his only sibling, his sister Yochi, become the victims of their mothers intrusive, suffocating, and controlling love. All-seeing and brilliantly manipulative, Hinda cajoles and pushes her children to become ideally successful and attractive young people in conformance to the social pressures that bore down upon Israeli

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

society in the 1960s as unrelentingly as they did upon American Jewish society in the 1950s.

Yet however seductive and determined his mother's will, it remains within Aron's power to deny her her victory. And this he does, and in a special way that sets the terms of the novel as a whole. He refuses to grow. Aron is clever in school, popular among his friends, and generally obedient at home. But as he reaches the year of his bar mitzvah, he fails to develop beyond the diminutive frame of a nine-year-old, and he fails to reach puberty. While the boys in his class are developing sideburns and body hair and feeling the rush of hormones in their loins, Aron remains unchanged. His cognitive equipment races ahead, but his body stays in place. As in the case of Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum,* Aron's smallness is presented as a kind of magical given of the plot rather than as a medical mystery. The only real interpretation open to the reader is that, however unconsciously, Aron is simply refusing to grow.

His refusal is an anorexia of the spirit that aims to repulse the mother in the precise area of her most aggressive nurturance. But only in part. His refusal to grow is also a decision to decline entry into the world of adulthood represented not only by his parents and the social horizon of the shikkun but also by Israeli society as a whole on the eve of the Six Day War. What Aron finds so disturbing about the adult world he is expected to enter is the exact reflection of the means he uses to protest it: the body and its claims of dominance over culture. His rejection of puberty is his response to a society that is permeated at every level by a vulgar sexuality and a spirit-killing scatology.

This is not necessarily an unconvincing picture of Israeli society, but it is not one very familiar to us from other Hebrew writers. Surely in the wider frame of coming-of-age novels generally – before *Catcher in the Rye* and afterward – the sensitive young man feels affronted by the crude sexuality he sees around him. But usually the debased sensuality of the adult world is contrasted with the adolescent's discovery of purer though no less sexual stirrings within himself. This is Aron's difference in *The Book of Intimate Grammar.* By refusing to make the passage from latency to adolescence, Aron stays on one side of the great dividing line. He observes the corrupted world of the flesh all around him; he is forcibly immersed in it. Yet he has no answering experience that would provide him with a way of crossing over on his own terms. He is left to find a way out that concedes nothing to the body and instead lays claim to the consolations of art. It is a way out that in the end leaves us less than persuaded.

In the meantime, Grossman uses Aron's unmediated vision of the grown-up world as a technique of defamiliarization that results in some of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the novel's sharpest writing. Take, for example, the story of Yochi's menarche as recalled by Aron at a time when he himself should be entering puberty. Aron is sitting with his older sister and parents at the dinner table as Yochi fends off her mother's attempts to stuff her with fat slices of bread smeared with butter and topped with matjes herring. Suddenly they notice that the bathroom toilet is overflowing. Papa gets a pair of pliers and thrusts his arm into the "muck and filth."

> Finally he fishes out a glob of something that looked like a piece of meat, and he stood there gaping at it until Mama grabbed the pliers from him and waved the glob in front of Yochi's nose. Well well, the princess has the curse, like a million other women, including her mother, and right on time, too, so why don't you just keep it to yourself, do you have to shout it from the rooftops, and she waved the pliers in front of her, like a triumphant surgeon, screaming at the top of her lungs; maybe that's when Yochi developed the whistling in her ears, and Yochi, nobody's lemaleh, sat perfectly still this time, red as blood, and after that she was always careful with the curse, and Aron too learned to be careful in the toilet, and Mama said, "Nu, Aron, are you going to stand there gaping all night, can't you see the table's set."

Welcome to puberty, Yochi! The fact that her humiliation takes place as an interruption of the evening meal (to which Aron is forced to return) is not accidental. The table and the kitchen indisputably belong to the mother, and she uses her power to create a system of total control over what the members of the family consume, as well as what they eliminate. The bloody menstrual napkin that resembles a piece of meat nicely makes the connection between crude alimentary processes and the more intimate mysteries of sex and procreation; it also signals the mother's intention to extend her dominion over both. Although she screams at her daughter to keep the curse to herself, the real message is the inversion of any notion of privacy. No bodily process, no matter how inward or intimate, can be shielded from the humiliating – and in Aron's case – castrating gaze of the mother. You can learn to be careful in the toilet but there is ultimately nowhere to hide.

Aron cannot escape the suffocating impress of his parents' bodies. After surprising them one day while having intercourse standing up, he learns to cough conspicuously before entering their room. Trips to the beach with other families are occasions for a painful exposure to the abundant unclothed flesh of his parents' friends as they cavort on the shore and teasingly pull down each other's trunks under the water. He

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

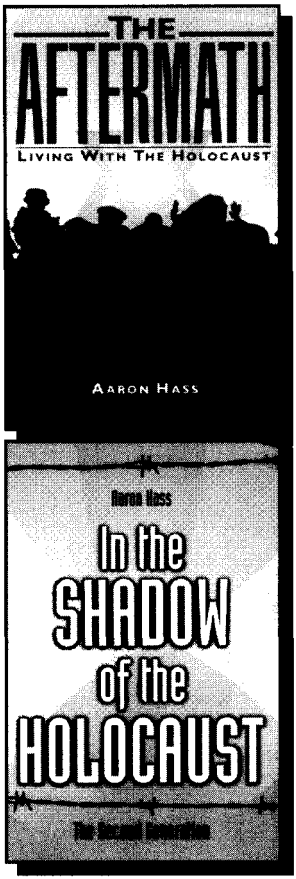
sometimes finds girlie magazines around the house, with the crosswords filled in in his mother's hand. Part of Aron's sentimental education comes from the discovery of a pack of pornographic playing cards in his father's sock drawer featuring "Alfonso, the whip-cracking dwarf, ringmaster of the Pussy Circus" and his slave, the lovely Roxana. Aron is disgusted and fascinated by his find but, alas, not aroused. The frequent inspection of the cards leads instead to an elaborate fantasy of rescue. Roxana, he imagines – and it does not take much to grasp his own identification with her – agreed to have "her picture taken to earn money because she was poor, and had innocently fallen into the clutches of that bastard Alfonso; if only he were older, if only he had power and money, he would dedicate his life to saving Roxana from Alfonso, because how long would she remain virtuous with so much corruption around her?"

Now, Aron's parents and their friends are hardly the same as Alfonso's Pussy Circus. They may be crude, but there is nothing perverted about their crudeness. That is just the point. Their preoccupation with the body is simply part of the normal texture of working-class life, which hides no secret deviance beneath its surface. This is the kind of normative corruption that besets Aron, like the Roxana of his fantasy, and in the face of which he struggles to remain virtuous. The problem is that corruption is inscribed in the nature of things, and while Aron may resist it in himself he cannot extirpate it in others. The point is brought home when once as a boy Aron lovingly raised a kitten from birth on a vegetarian diet until the kitten became a cat and escaped to roam the neighborhood. Aron painfully suffers his parents' taunts about the cat's native carnivorousness and its feasting on discarded chicken legs snatched from the garbage can in the alley. Sadistically, they prove their point by taking the cat indoors and placing before it a piece of raw liver. The parents roar hysterically as the cat gleefully devours the meat and growls menacingly at Aron, who had fed it milk from a dropper as a baby and who is now reduced to tears of humiliation and powerlessness.

Aron's powerlessness within the family is underscored by an extraordinary weekly ritual. Every Thursday night, while the women are doing a thorough housecleaning, the father takes a long bath and then, with his towel wrapped around his waist, he comes into the living room and lies face-down on the sofa. The women gather around him (this includes the grandmother, Moshe's mother) and scour his massive back for blackheads and whiteheads, which they fall upon with horror and rapture, squeezing with their fingernails and applying alcohol, and working in tune to the father's answering groans of submission and delight. As an evocation of stone-age rites, the scourging and grooming of the dominant male, with its not uncomplicated exchanges of pleasure and control, presents a re-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now available in paperback...



The Aftermath

Living with the Holocaust

Aaron Hass

"In this beautifully written book, Aaron Hass explores human responses to the trauma of the Holocaust from a psychosocial and mental health perspective.... The book succeeds in offering a balanced view of survivors as individuals who have been able to move forward following adversity, but at great psychic cost."

–Jewish Book World

This study is the most comprehensive examination undertaken of the psychological impact of the Holocaust on survivors. Covering a broad range of topics, it offers a perspective of how one who has lived with terror for years is able to avoid paralysis and move forward.

57459-5 Paperback $16.95

In the Shadow of the Holocaust

The Second Generation

Aaron Hass

"In the Shadow of the Holocaust *is among the very best in the Holocaust literature, an exemplary model for the rest of us who study others and try to make sense of what we see and hear."*

–Robert Coles, Professor of Psychiatry and Medical Humanities, Harvard University

This study provides a vibrant account of the experiences of Holocaust survivors' children. Now in their thirties and forties, these men and women describe their relationships with their parents and offer their perceptions of the impact of the Holocaust on their families.

49893-7 Paperback $15.95

Available in bookstores or from

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

40 West 20th Street, N.Y., NY 10011-4211.
Call toll-free 800-872-7423.
Web site: http://www.cup.org
MasterCard/VISA accepted. Prices subject to change.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vealing picture of gender relations in Israeli society of thirty years ago. It is a picture in which the son does not figure. Aron takes in the scene through the doorway of the kitchen, where he sits on a low stool working on his assigned chore of peeling a mound of potatoes for the Sabbathcholent. Scrawny and underdeveloped, Aron is unlikely ever to accede to the prerogatives of the father's bearlike body, nor is he even permitted to participate in the collective female tribute to it. His response to his exclusion is to daydream while performing his repetitive scullery chores, and it is in these vivid reveries, undertaken as both denial and escape, that Grossman locates the origins of Aron's aesthetic consciousness and the seeds of his identity as an artist.

These are the beginnings of the track laid down in *The Book of Intimate Grammar* as an alternative to the vulgar sensual life. But before discussing the claims of art, it is worth asking the obvious question of why this novel is so extravagantly preoccupied with the claims of the body. Beyond an indisputable pinch of idiosyncratic pathology, the answer lies, I believe, in Grossman's presentation of Israel as a society of immigrant survivors and in his analysis of the unseen but enormous costs of successful survival. In the conventional Zionist story, the settlers of the country are not common immigrants but pioneers whose powerful spiritual longings enable them to endure privation and hostility. The truth, of course, is that the vast majority of Jews ended up in Israel because of historical circumstance rather than ideological motivation. The obstacles faced by these accidental immigrants – certainly as much after their arrival in Israel as before – were every bit as difficult as those faced by the more famous intentional immigrants; yet their struggles remained untransfigured, and unmystified, by a rhetoric of sacrifice and ideals. Grossman sees in this unspiritual survival a force which is at once vastly impressive and threatening.

There is a crucial difference between Aron Kleinman's parents and the parents of Momik in Grossman's Holocaust novel, *See Under: Love*. Though they remained alive, Momik's parents were sucked into the black hole of the camps and left fearful and enfeebled. Aron's parents, whose brush with twentieth-century Jewish history was gruesome but not so catastrophic, were not so impaired. They survived, each in his or her own way, precisely because of their enormous energies and appetites, which remain intact and unstilled. This kind of survival, Grossman implies, necessarily requires – and results from – living life within the orbit of the body with its pleasures, nourishments and waste products. And for Aron's parents, it is enough. Yet through Aron's eyes, Grossman shows us that the price paid for life lived in this way is nothing less than the obliteration of culture itself. In his parents' home there are, simply, no books, except

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for the Hebrew encyclopedia his father purchases by subscription through his union. His mother won't have books around because they collect dust, and in her eyes dust is an apt metaphor for the weight and utility of culture.

Aron ends up discovering the world beyond the body through an act of illicit breaking and entering. (He certainly does not find it in the public schools, which teach academic skills and statist ideology but little resembling culture.) There lives in Aron's shikkun a forty-year-old single woman, a university graduate, named Edna Bloom, who own a piano and plays classical music on it (it is the only instrument in the neighborhood) and who has decorated her flat with reproductions of modern art and with artistic bric-a-brac brought back from trips abroad. To the boys Aron hangs out with she is an object of ridicule, and of some fascination as well. So, in an episode that takes place in the opening pages of the novel, the boys steal a passkey and slip into her flat while she is at work. For the rest of the boys, the strange surroundings they find inside are reason for redoubled derision; for Aron, who is as ready as they to mock the absurd distortions of "modern art," the experience is transformative. Standing before a copy of Picasso's "Guernica," with its fractured bodies and tortured faces, Aron tries to maintain a contemptuous distance but ends up being staggered by the work's power:

> Aron went back to the painting. First he faced it, then he turned away, then he turned back to gape at it some more, shutting his eyes, surrendering with open arms, backing off with a little dance, meandering like a lost panther, like a spy colliding with his mirror image, scratching where his skin tingled, glancing over his shoulder, what if it came off the wall and started following him, and a flower blooms out of the sword in the dead man's hand, and suddenly you see eyes everywhere, run for your life.

He is captivated by something which, though hardly material and substantial, is more real than the embodied life of his parents' world. The prowler has been kidnapped. For the other boys, one visit is plenty, but Aron cannot stay away. He barters for the passkey and illicitly makes Edna Bloom's apartment the secret home of his spirit.

But even this safe haven cannot long stand before his parents' philistinism. In the end, the wolf is invited in through the front door. When Edna Bloom hires Aron's father Moshe to demolish the wall separating her bedroom from her salon, her purpose is not interior decoration or home improvement. Watching this muscular bear of a man hammer away

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at her wall in his sweaty undershirt, Edna lapses in and out of a tremorous autoerotic fantasy. After years of loneliness and exploitative affairs with married men, she has decided to give herself this gift. To prolong her rapture, she pays for another wall to be torn down after the first has been demolished, and then another and another, until her apartment has been gutted and all her savings depleted. In the end she is taken away by her parents to be institutionalized.

The destruction of Edna Bloom's apartment is one of the longest and most brilliant sections of the novel. The narrative breaks with the disciplined allegiance to Aron's mental and social world and approaches, as Robert Alter has pointed out, the magic realism of Grossman's earlier work. Transformations and symbolic exchanges abound. As Edna declines and her walls are torn down, Moshe is built up and turned into a larger-than-life figure, a kind of Vulcan in the netherworld of the shikkun. After years of domestication and inactivity, the heavy work with the sledge hammer pumps him up and returns him to his outsized manliness. His vigor makes him newly attractive to his wife, and they surprisingly conceive a child who will presumably console them for the disappointment and embarrassment over Aron's failure to grow. The greatest liberation for the father comes with the release of his story. In the presence of Edna and Aron and in the absence of the mother, Moshe is freed to tell the long-forbidden story of his past. The chronicle of terrible suffering and astonishing survival tumbles out in fantastic cadences and becomes the boy's most tangible inheritance from his father.

The fall of Edna Bloom's house of culture is the critical counterpoint to Aron's nascent consciousness as an artist. Although Aron is stunned by his first encounter with high art, her flat can serve only as a site of initiation but not as a model of how to be in the world. The function of art in Edna Bloom's domestic space lies somewhere between decoration and self-improvement; and the collection of familiar reproductions and artistic travel souvenirs verges on kitsch. The pillars of her psyche are certainly not shored up by contact with the higher things in life, and when Moshe Kleinman demolishes the inner partitions of her self, the whole edifice collapses.

To become an artist, Aron must supply the missing qualities of tenacious will and inner depth. Tenacity and cleverness pose no problem; he has them in abundance. He beguiles his friends with fabulous schemes and hilarious imitations and awes them with his Houdini-inspired escapes from impossible confinements; and he makes up for his smallness by being a scrappy wrestler and soccer player. The quality of inner imaginative power is more elusive. It is revealed in Aron's reveries, which begin as an escape from unpleasant realities (like his daydreaming while peeling po-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tatoes on Thursday nights) and go on to become a zone of inner freedom and linguistic experimentation. These inner explorations are connected to one of Grossman's most inspired pieces of cleverness. The Hebrew language's verb tenses lack the present continuous tense, and when, as a native Hebrew speaker, Aron learns of its existence in English class he is enthralled, and he proceeds happily to add the English "-ing" suffix to Hebrew verbs. Through this discovery he can give a name to his particular mode of serious daydreaming; he calls it "Aroning."

As Aron's friends grow physically he develops imaginatively. His reveries deepen in their function and content, at times leaving the orbit of his narcissism and attaining an empathic vision of the inner experience of others. Language is the subject of many of these moments. He has favorite words that he plays with and caresses in his mind; for there, in his mind, materiality poses no threat, and it is permissible for words to be incarnated as "sensual beings." Whether sensual or precisely Cartesian, the rich linguistic code of Aron's inner life is what is being referred to as the "intimate grammar" of the novel's title. It is in these passages that the debt to Joyce is most evident. Like Stephen Daedalus, Aron Kleinfeld aspires to be a priest of the imagination who, through the mystery of language, can transmute the gross bread of daily life into the wine of the spirit. The shaping allusions are drawn from different sources, of course. Aron's name refers to the eponymous high priest of the Hebrew Bible. The foundational text for him is Chapter Six of the Book of Isaiah, which he chants at his bar mitzvah – a ceremony meaningless in every other way – and which describes the prophet's call to his vocation. God touches Isaiah's lips with a glowing coal, and immediately his impurity is removed and his sin expiated. Yet where Aron's call emphasizes purification and the redemption of sensuality, Stephen's call underscores his embrace of the world and his readiness to sin and to fall over and over again in devotion to his art.

Grossman's turn toward art as an alternative to life rather than an engagement with it is evident in the ambiguous conclusion to the novel. Feeling betrayed by his friends and isolated amid the frenzy of a country on the brink of the 1967 War, Aron climbs inside an abandoned refrigerator in an empty lot near his house and shuts the door. He intends to perform – for himself as the sole audience – the most audacious exploit of his young career as an escape artist.

I read *The Book of Intimate Grammar* when it first came out in Hebrew, with a number of friends in a reading group, and we were all convinced at the time that the novel ended with Aron's suicide. Since then we've had our doubts. In post-publication statements and interviews, Grossman has made it clear that he intended the refrigerator to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

serve as a chrysalis for Aron's rebirth as an artist. Yet in the end, this transcendent interpretation can at most be felt as the pressure of an authorial intention that remains schematic.

This concluding equivocation is merely a sign of the failure of the novel's two tracks, the life of the body and the life of art, to meet. In shaping an autobiographical myth in fiction, Grossman has given a wickedly brilliant account of the social milieu from which he emerged. But this world has nothing to say to him and nothing to give him, and the implied next stage would be a successfully engineered escape that would catapult him into a different trajectory. The fabulistic inventiveness of *See Under: Love* indicates, retrospectively, where this flight path will take him, as does a recently published new novel, as yet untranslated, about the picaresque adventures of an adolescent hero. Although Grossman has taken on large issues like the Holocaust and relations between Arabs and Jews, the ordinary construction of Israeli reality, with all its extraordinariness, seems to hold little interest for him. He is operating on a different plane.

Alan Mintz

New French Poetry

I. E. By Claude Royet-Journoud. Translated from the French by Keith Waldrop. Burning Deck Press, *Série d'écriture* Supplement no. 1. $5.00.
BOUDICA. By Paol Keineg. Translated from the French by Keith Waldrop. Burning Deck Press, *Série d'écriture* no. 8. $6.00.
THE EMPEROR PEACOCK MOTH. By Marcel Cohen. Translated from the French by Cid Corman. Burning Deck Press, *Série d'écriture* no. 9. $6.00.

With American poetry hovering between the aesthetic poles of creative-writing program chic and "in-your-face spoken-word," Burning Deck Press's *Série d'écriture* offers a welcome change, infused with abstract trends from across the Atlantic. Long among "experimental" poetry's most vigorous champions, poets, translators and Burning Deck cofounders Rosemarie and Keith Waldrop have spent the last thirty-five years creating a small-press showcase for the avant-garde.

Since they took over the *Série* in 1992 (inheriting it from the British press Spectacular Diseases), the Waldrops have garnered an American following for some of France's best known experimental poets: Jean-Daive, Dominique Fourcade, Emmanuel Hocqard, and Joseph Guglielmi, among others. This year's list is spearheaded by the chapbook *i.e.*, an in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

triguing (if nearly impenetrable) verse offering by the long-haired poster boy of French post-surrealism, Claude Royet-Journoud. Sparse, lyrical, charged with silent, white space (and courageously translated by Keith Waldrop), *i.e.* is both a readers' dream and a reviewer's nightmare. Its effect, yoked entirely to the *experience* of reading, is indescribable in any prose terms, least of all a critic's staid exposition.

Born in Lyon, Royet-Journoud first came to public attention in Paris, as part of a 1960s coterie of young poets mentored by Edmond Jabès. Known as an eccentric (he is famous for embellishing his public readings by timing his poems' "white space" with a stopwatch), he has had a tremendous impact on French poetry ever since his first book, *Reversal*, unleashed the central challenge, "échapperons-nous à l'analogie?" which became the manifesto and rallying cry for a nascent group of hard-core experimentalists. He founded the magazine *A.*, co-edited by Anne-Marie Albiach, featuring American poets he felt showed "complicity" with the French avant-garde: Charles Olson, Louis Zukovsky, Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer. John Ashbery held an especially high seat in the magazine's American pantheon.

i.e. might best be termed a kind of tributary to the seamless current of poetic thought that flows through Royet-Journoud's full-length books, from *Reversal* to *The Notion of Obstacle* and *Objects Contain the Infinite*. Like all his poems, *i.e.* began with scores of pages of prose meanderings which he mined for their pithiest insights. The result (as he himself admitted), is "a little Mallarméan," its ethereal fragility on the page a *de facto* homage to Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés* which, in 1897, revolutionized the face of French poetry, ripping open its dense, stanzaic structure, making words cascade across gaping, blank-page caesuras.

"Silence is a form," Royet-Journoud has insisted, and it works for him in *i.e.* With every artificial or decorative turn of phrase stripped away, he seems to be writing about isolation, hinting that language itself is an inadequate medium. Words strike, he says, by "accident"; motive "dies in a crease of the page." Delving into the space (again) *between* words, he milks relationships from physical gestures. "Legs carry the alphabet;" the "posture" of a woman he admires is more powerful than any word, even that denoting her identity: "she takes the place of the name." In the past, Royet-Journoud has referred to his poetry as a "detective story" in which everyone knows a murder has occurred, but no one can find the body (proving that even he succumbs to "analogy"); here, the "corpse" is the art of verbal communication. But it won't do to give *i. e.* too literal a reading. The countless motifs woven into this web are deceptive, thematic decoys. "Walls" and closed rooms lurk on every page; body parts morph into parts of speech – the eye is a "phrase," the lungs

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an "adjectival mirror." The poem becomes a vertiginous scramble after clues that lead, finally, back to the empty space "behind the image," announced in the opening lines. Such mischievous, abstract writing is far better read than dissected.

Paol Keineg's *Boudica* (also translated by Keith Waldrop) is more discursive but equally daring. Of Breton origin, Keineg currently teaches at Duke University; he has published eight books of poetry and several plays, mostly in French but occasionally producing a poem in the nearly extinct Breton dialect he champions as a political *cause célèbre*. The forty poems in the *Boudica* cycle reflect his preoccupation with Brittany's indigenous Celtic traditions, suppressed first by the Romans, then by the French, and more recently drowned in the onslaught of American popular culture.

To Keineg, the "colonizer's history" is written even on the landscape, where old and new coexist in jarring contradiction. The ancient hills and hardscrabble farms, where the ghosts of druids, Armorican tribal chiefs and marauding Romans appear alongside "girls in shorts and T-shirts" bicycling through the ruined "oppidum," are his record of forced assimilation. Abrupt anachronisms make the poem a wild ride through time. A crumbling Roman agora stretches "between Shell and Esso"; the French sub-prefect's wife is objectified as a modern "Winged Victory," a symbol of imperial domination.

The poem's title refers to the legendary Queen Boudica, who in 61 A. D. led a legion of women-warriors against the Romans. Like a Breton Beatrice, she appears as Keineg's vision of idealized resistance, a Muse recalling a proud, past moment when "nobody accepted the unacceptable." Nostalgic, haunted by her legacy, the characters in the poem wonder how her resilience could have been so diluted, over the years. "'If we could do it over,' says a peasant. 'If we/could do it over,' says a worker.'"The question is, would anything be different? Austere and beautiful as the poem itself, the revenant Boudica "in make-up, in the chiaroscuro of coronation" probes the source of her homeland's regret and political disempowerment, "sloughing off" modern Brittany as a "paradise of paranoia . . . a world incapable of closure."

Cid Corman's translation of Marcel Cohen's *The Peacock Emperor Moth* rounds out the current *Série* with a stark foray into the modern urban jungle. Cohen, who lives in Paris and makes his living as a journalist, seems obsessed with the problems of anxiety and social alienation. The prose-poems in this collection exaggerate the fetal sprawl of neuroses that lurk in the "naked city." Like a latter-day Restif de la Bretonne, Cohen scours the streets of Paris, ferreting out characters whose eccentricities border on the grotesque.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The book starts harmlessly enough: A lone swimmer, enveloped by the temperate Mediterranean, is a lyrical image of isolation. But subsequent manifestations of lonely paranoia grow exponentially more bizarre: Consider the man, desperate for company, who roams the city's train stations, collecting discarded negatives from photo booths and calling them pictures of "friends." A natural history museum's compulsive director frets about animals encroaching into urban areas – crickets in the Paris Metro, muskrats foraging along the quais – not because they're dangerous but because they take up valuable space. He rails against nature "increasing in anarchic ways."

In this claustrophobic environment, what relationships can exist? Those Cohen depicts are satirically twisted, almost beyond recognition. One couple refuses to exchange any personal information; when the woman suggests, after years of clandestine rendezvous in cafes and seedy hotels, that perhaps they should at least reveal their names, her lover gasps, "That could open a crack and swallow the world! Do you ask an angel where he comes from?" Like the acrobat couple who wonder whether it's possible to make love "without a net, and twelve meters off the ground," Cohen inflates the city's psychic dangers for effect. Embracing the same neo-Dada capri- ciousness that animates Henri Michaux's *Plume*, his characterizations are humorous, eerie and utterly absorbing.

If Cohen reads flawlessly in Corman's translation, which replicates the rhythm without resorting to syntactically convoluted "franglais," Royet-Journoud and Keineg suffer from Waldrop's occasional lapses of judgment. Admittedly, Royet-Journoud confronts the translator with Herculean challenges. But Waldrop's phrase "you are smack in the dark," for example, is far too abrupt and percussive, and drops the ambiguity of the French, "you are in the middle of *noir*," which means not only night but also blackness and nothingness. Waldrop has trouble keeping up with the brusque shifts in diction but does an excellent job of conveying Keineg's sweeping, cinematic landscape, full of ruins and time-worn monuments.

Burning Deck Press has garnered an American following for some of France's best-known experimental poets, and its ongoing *Serie d'ecriture* should be of enormous interest to poets on both continents.

Catherine A. Salmons

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

To the Editor:

It was a disappointment to see, in Edith Kurzweil's "A Politically Correct Freud?" (in *PR* 2, 1996) a rehash of distorted press accounts of the flap over the delayed Freud exhibition at the Library of Congress. One would hope for more from an intellectual of her stature, particularly because (as an announced contributor to the catalogue of the exhibition) she might be expected to have first-hand knowledge about it. Here, I can only briefly point out some of the factual errors in her piece.

She begins by reporting that the "current brouhaha . . . was instigated by two Freud scholars . . . Peter Swales . . . and Frederick Crews." Swales wrote a petition urging that the proposed exhibition "should suitably portray the present status of knowledge and adequately reflect the full spectrum of informed opinion about the status of Freud's contribution to intellectual history," and recruited fifty scholars – including Crews and myself – to sign it. (Crews could well have been omitted because his contributions to Freud scholarship, if any, are negligible.) Nothing in the original petition remotely suggested that the project be abandoned or demanded any control over it, only the addition of one member to the advisory committee. The reason for that, ironically, was the fear that the other advisors and planners were all committed to the perpetuation of a mythical version of the Freud story, being dominated by members of the international psychoanalytic establishment.

Kurzweil's account then insinuates that Swales's motive was the cynical desire to "make a splash" and that he succeeded by going to his "contacts in the press." Later, she adds: "The press has had a field day, and especially the *New York Times* has given multiple exposure to Crews." I know of only one rather brief letter by Crews published in the *Times* last December 15th. Numerous cogent and thoughtful letters of protest to that paper by distinguished persons about various misleading stories on this affair have not been published. Kurzweil implies – in striking contrast to the facts – that press coverage has been biased towards Swales and our effort. After Dinitia Smith's extraordinarily slanted and inaccurate piece in the *New York Times* of December 10th, 1995, newspapers and magazines all over the world seized upon Smith's suggestion that the petition was an act of "wrath" in "a highly charged battle," an effort to "crush" psychoanalysis, and an attempt to "suppress" Freud's ideas. From there it was no great step to the outrageous charges by the French analyst Roudinesco, widely disseminated in Europe and South America, e.g., that we signers are "ayatollahs" or Nazis hunting down

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Freudian Jews," and that we want to convict Freud of "crimes" like the "sexual abuse" of various persons.

Kurzweil writes that "opponents of psychoanalysis . . . insist on helping to select which . . . items in these [the Freud] archives ought to be displayed." Evidence? None. Actually, curator Michael Roth approached some of us with a request to advise him on the matter; far from "insisting," very few even participated.

Kurzweil likens the postponement of the Library of Congress show to the controversy over the Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian. The Smithsonian organizers were quite aware that a balanced presentation bringing in the findings of recent scholarship, which challenge the received myth that countless American lives were saved by dropping the bombs, would disturb many veterans and citizens, but had the courage to plan an exhibit that deviated from what was politically expedient in favor of intellectual integrity. Kurzweil calls that "the 'politically correct' [!] rewriting of history" which "was questioned" – as it happened, by the potent veterans' lobbies, in blatant power plays. She claims that those who oppose an official (and mythical) portrayal at the Library of Congress are "on the attack in order to have their own version of the past accepted." But our polite request's explicit aim was not to control or limit the versions of the past on display but the opposite.

In the present dispute there have been heated attacks and really libelous slurs. Well might Kurzweil ask, "What is the reason for the force of these assaults?" – except that they have been directed at us, the signers, to whom she attributes all the venom and rancor.

Perhaps many defenders of psychoanalysis, seeing the notorious names of Swales and Crews on the petition, jumped to the conclusion that it was another audacious blow at Freud's halo. Without bothering to verify their suspicions, writers as good and sometimes careful as Edith Kurzweil and Anthony Lewis have joined what they took to be the side of freedom of thought. The sad irony is that the allegedly persecuted analysts they are defending include egregious practitioners of censorship and hostility to free inquiry. Their attacks inadvertently slander people who believe deeply in the value of open scholarship and the freedom of speech.

Robert R. Holt
New York, New York

Edith Kurzweil replies:

It is difficult to figure out what Dr. Holt's argument is. He seems to be saying that the proposed Freud exhibit celebrates a false theory and a rigid international establishment. But he demonstrates a shocking lack of knowledge of the intricate stratifications and disagreements, particularly among the members of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the international organization – about which I have written two books. Thereby he reconfirms the Europeans' perception of American provinciality.

Essentially, Dr. Holt is not disagreeing with me but with Freud. Dr. Holt's scholarship focuses merely on how Freud's early theoretical contributions contradict later ones; he takes issue with the "international establishment," because its American branch (ignoring Freud's advice) chose not to admit psychologists like himself to membership; and he forgets that both movement and theory are based on clinical therapy. However, Freud, himself, was aware that misunderstandings are inevitable – arising from the fact that there is a structural relation among psychoanalytic therapy, theory and movement – among individuals whose theories must objectify their own subjectivity.

By amalgamating concerns stemming from organizational issues and theory alone, Dr. Holt is led to support an exhibit that proves Freud to have been wrong, to have promoted mythical notions about human psychology. Then, why bother to have an exhibit at all? Dr. Holt appears to forget, also, that his own research and all of the Freud studies he praises, as well as those of the Freudians he attacks, are based on the fact that our entire culture is infused with Freud's ideas, and is beholden to his genius.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Index to Volume LXII

BANG, Mary Jo: Chicago (poem), III, 513
BEN-TOV, S.: The Psalm of the Shutters, (poem), II, 304
BOGEN, Don: Bouquinistes (poem), II, 303
BRADLEY, George: The Cliché Made Strange (poem), II, 300,
BRANDAO, Fiama Hasse Pais: The Decade of Sisyphus (poem), (tr. Alexis Levitin), II, 305
BRUCKNER, Pascal: The Edge of Babel, II, 242
BURKE, Karen: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 374
CARMI, T.: Songs (and Simulations) Against My Will, (poem) IV, 665
CATULLUS: Brother (poem), (tr. Marcia Karp), I, 124
CAVAFY, C. P.: Horace in Athens (poem), (tr. George Kalogeris), I, 119
COHEN, I. Bernhard: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 374
COOKSON, Jr., Peter W.: (br) Higher Education Under Fire: Politics, Economics, and the Crisis of the Humanities (ed. Michael Bérubé); We Scholars: Changing the Culture of the University by David Damrosch; Cultural Capital: The Problems of Literary Canon Formation by John Guillory; The Uses of the University by Clark Kerr; Learning From the Past (ed. Diane Ravitch and Maris A. Vinonovskis; An Ethical Education: Community and Morality in the Multiculutural University (ed. M.N.S. Sellers); PC Wars: Politics and Correctness in the Academy (ed. Jeffrey Williams), III, 523
CROUCH, Stanley: Blues to be Redefined, Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 384
CSOORI, Sandor: May the Water Keep Vigil with Me (poem), (tr. Len Roberts and Anette Marta), II, 294
DISHELL, Stuart, Several Dioramas, Some Remembered, Some Invented, From The Musee Grevin, (poem) IV, 664
DELBANCO, Andrew: (br) John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism by Alan Ryan, III, 315
DICKSTEIN, Morris: Depression Culture: The Dream of Mobility, I, 65
DONOGHUE, Denis: What Literature Does, Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 406
DUFFIN, K. E.: Male (poem), II, 301
ELYTIS, Odysseus: Towards Troy; In Ioulita's Blue (poems), (tr. Jeffrey Carson and Nikkos Sarris), III, 502
ESTERHAZY, Peter: The Problem Facing the Writer Today, II, 272
FILKINS, Peter: Now and Then (poem), I, 129
FROMKIN, David: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 400
GILMAN, Sander L.: (br) Approaching Hysteria. Disease and Its Interpretations by Mark Micale, II, 342

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GOODHEART, Eugene: The Postmodern Liberalism of Richard Rorty, II, 223
HADAS, Rachel: Greek Gods (poem), I, 121
HANLY, Elizabeth: Cuba's Young Poets, I, 140
HARTMAN, Geoffrey: (br) Albert Speer: His Battle With The Truth by Gitta Sereny, IV, 672
HASS, Robert: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 421
HAXTON, Brooks: Seasonal, November Seasonal, (poems) IV, 670
HIMMELFARB, Gertrude: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 397
HOLLANDER, Paul: (br) The Dream That Failed: Reflections on the Soviet Union by Walter Laqueur, IV, 681
HOLTON, Gerald: Science Education and the Sense of Self, II, 205
HONNEGGER, Gitta: (br) Extinction by Thomas Bernhard, III, 528
HORACE: To Lyde; To Tyndaris; To Pollio (poems), (tr. David Ferry), I, 115
HYETT, Barbara Helfgott: Northern Swift Fox (poem), III, 513
JOSEPH, Jenny: Old night (poem), II, 307
JOZSEF, Attila: Worn Out; Everything is Old (poems), (tr. Daphne Kalotay), III, 507
KAGAN, Donald: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 419
KALOGERIS, George: Cavafy (poem), I, 118
KRISEOVÁ, Eda: The Gates Opened, (story) IV, 641
KONRAD, George: The Modernization of the Jews, IV, 570
KRAMER, Hilton: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 405
KRIEGEL, Leonard: Immigrants (story), I, 105
KURLANSKY, Mark: The Italian Connection, I, 131
KURZWEIL, Edith: The 39th Psychoanalytic Congress, I, 48; (br) The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States. Freud and the Americans, 1917-1985 by Nathan G. Hale, I, 149; A Politically Correct Freud?, II, 236; Films at the Festival, II, 322, The Holocaust: Memory and Theory, III, 356; French Anti-Semitism: 1940-1944, IV, 544
LAQUEUR, Walter: Anti-Communism Abroad: A Memoir of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, II, 184
LAUGHLIN, James: The Gods (poem), I, 124
MINTZ, Alan: (br) The Yellow Wind; Sleeping on a Wire; See Under: Love; Smile of the Lamb; The Book of Intimate Grammar by David Grossman, IV, 691
MANDELMAN, Avner: Life in Paris, (story) IV, 648
LONGLEY, Michael: Water-Lily; Hippomanes (poems), II, 293
MEYER, Steven: (br) New and Collected Poems. 1652-1994 by Geoffrey Hill, I, 162; (br) The Enemy's Country: Words, Contexture, and Other Circumstances of Language by Geoffrey Hill, I, 162

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MICHAELS, Leonard: A Girl With a Monkey (story), II, 312
MILOSZ, Czeslaw, Notes on Joseph Brodsky, II, 184, Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 423
MORITZ, A.F.: Touring Machine (poem), III, 511
NEKRASOV, Victor: Forty Years Later, I, 54
ORNSTEIN, Paul: Heinz Kohut. IV, 615
OSHEROW, Jacqueline: Calling Emily Dickinson to Come, as Guide, Out West (poem), II, 295
OVID: The Poet's Epigram (or: The Work Speaks for Itself) (poem), (tr. Catherine Salmons), I, 119
OZ, Amos: Don't Call It Sleep (story), III, 493
PAOLA, Suzanne: Borderlands:Infertility (poem), III, 509
PATAI, Daphne: Heterophobia: The Feminist Turn Against Men. IV, 580
PAVLOV, Konstantin: New Soul (poem), (tr. Ludmilla G. Popova-Wightman), II, 308
PERCHIK, Simon: * (poem), II, 305
PHILLIPS, William: John Dewey Then and Now (Comment), I, 9; Dostoevsky (Comment), II, 181; Orwell (Comment), II, 182, Comment, 111, 353; Comment, IV, 541
PINSKER, Sanford: (br) Letters of Sidney Hook: Democracy, Communism and the Cold War (ed. Edward S. Shapiro), III, 520
POWELL, Amanda: Seeing Raymond Carver (poem), II, 300
PRITCHARD, Selwyn: The Last of England (poem), II, 302
RIMBAUD, Arthur: The Swindled Heart (poem), (tr. Matthias Regan), III, 505
RUDMAN, Mark: Role Play (poem), I, 126
RYAN, Kay: Doubt (poem), II, 299
RYCROFT, Charles: (br) An Anthropologist on Mars. Seven Paradoxical Tales by Oliver Sacks, II, 326
SABA, Umberto: The Goat, Words, (poems) IV, 661
SALMONS, Catherine A: (br) I. E. By Claude Royet-Journoud, Boudica by Paol Keineg, The Emperor Peacock Moth by Marcel Cohen, IV, 704
SCHLESINGER, Jr., Arthur: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 401
SCHWARTZ, Mel: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 378
SHATTUCK, Roger: Guilt, Justice, and Empathy in Melville and Camus, III, 430
SHAW, Peter: Pseudo-reform in the Academy, I, 94
SIDORSKY, David: (br) The Meaning of Life by A. J. Ayer, I, 153; (br) In Search of A Better World by Karl Popper, I, 153; (br) The Pursuit of Truth, I, 153
SILBER, John: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 382
SIMON, Rita J.: (br) Welfare Justice. Restoring Social Equality by Neil Gilbert, II, 338
SOLOMON, Sandy: Jealousy (poem), III, 514

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SPIELGELMAN, (br) Willard: A Silence Opens by Amy Clampitt, I, 167; (br) A Scattering of Salts by James Merrill, I, 162
SPIRES, Elizabeth: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 424
STRAND, Mark: The Delirium Waltz, (peom) IV, 656
STRAUS, Dorothea: In the Medici Woods. IV, 608
STROUT, Crushing: The New French Connection. IV, 596
SWAN, Brian: The Lost Boy, (poem) IV, 663
TALL, Deborah: Bog, (poem) IV 662
TATE, James: Different Kinds of Embroidery, (poem) IV, 661
TEICHMAN, Jenny: (br) Words and Life by Hilary Putman, II, 330; (br) Pragmatism: An Open Question by Hilary Putman, II, 330
TERADA, Rei: Date (poem), III, 506
TISMANEANU, Vladimir, (br) Conditions of Liverty: Civil Society and Its Rivals by Ernest Gellner, IV, 677
TOMLINSON, Charles: The Question; A Name on the Map (poems), II, 292
TRILLING, Diana: Goronwy Rees - and Others: A Remembrance of England, I, 11
VENIT, J.S.: Portraits, Ode to Waiting,: (poems) IV, 662
VITZ, Evelyn Birge: Rereading Rape in Medieval Literature, II, 280
WEBB, Igor: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 382
WEISS, David: Untitled I,II,III (poems), III, 508
WEISBERG, Richard: Leon Blum in Vichy France.(essay), IV, 553
WICKS, Susan: Components of Black (Poem), III, 510
WILKIN, Karen: At the Galleries, I, 81, At the Galleries, II, 255, At the Galleries, III, 471: At the Galleries, IV, 628
WILSON, E.O.: Beyond the Twilight of Reason: Rethinking the Western Tradition. A Symposium, III, 381
WISTRICH, Robert: Reshaping Israeli Identity, II, 215; Israel Past and Future, III, 450
WOLFE, Alan: The Culture of Cultural Studies, III, 485
YOUNG, Dale, C.: The Apprentice, (poem) IV, 669
YENSER, Stephen: Kerouacky (poem), II, 298

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Announcing

BREAKING TRADITIONS: FIN DE SIÈCLE 1896 AND 1996
A Conference

November 8th and 9th, 1996

Adelphi University
University College
Garden City, New York

For information call (516)877-4960

Participants include: Leon Cooper, Denis Donoghue, James Davison Hunter, Uta Gerhardt, Susan Haack, Edith Kurzweil, Walter Laqueur, Tibor Machan, Steven Marcus, Helen Meyers, Alfred Pfabigan, Ronald Radosh, Gunther Stent, Karen Wilkin, Robert Wistrich

The public is invited to attend free of charge

Open discussion will follow each session

Sponsored by Adelphi University, the Austrian Cultural Institute, and Partisan Review

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Miami University Press *Poetry Series*

OXFORD, OHIO

LONG DISTANCE

77 pp.

Aleda Shirley

$19.95 cloth ISBN 1-881163-16-4
$11.95 paper ISBN 1-881163-17-2

Shirley pays close attention to craft, and her language resonates with an honesty and openness to experience that is both seductive and refreshing. —*Library Journal*

The passage of time is important to Shirley, but her scale. . .is lifesized; her inner clock marks off seasons rather than epochs. Her work is remarkably touching. —Alice Fulton, *Poetry*

NOW

64 pp.

Judith Baumel

$16.95 cloth ISBN 1-881163-14-8
$10.95 paper ISBN 1-881163-15-6

Judith Baumel is one of the most gifted younger poets writing in this country. —Robert Hass

Baumel somehow manages to be a mistress of metaphor, a plainspoken observer, and a meditative poet all at the same time. —Rachel Hadas

NEITHER WORLD

94 pp.

Ralph Angel

$15.95 cloth ISBN 1-881163-12-1
$9.95 paper ISBN 1-881163-13-X

Winner of the 1995 James Laughlin Award of The Academy of American Poets

NEITHER WORLD *more than fulfills the promise of Ralph Angel's early work. He is now a major voice in poetry.* —John Ashbery

These fiery, trenchant poems illumine the recesses of our labyrinthine consciousness with fierce wit and intelligence. —James Tate

For individuals call Pathway Book Service (800) 345-6665
or Miami University Press (513) 529-5110
For trade call Ingram Book Company (800) 937-8200
or Baker & Taylor (800) 775-1100

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fall Reading from NYU Press

A Glimpse of Hell

Reports on Torture Worldwide

Edited by Duncan Forrest for Amnesty International

Published to coincide with Amnesty International's most ambitious campaign against torture for over a decade, *A Glimpse of Hell* serves as a broad and authoritative source of information on torture throughout the world, all in one accessible and chilling volume.

20 photos / 0-8147-2666-6 / $17.95 pa

Romantic Outlaws, Beloved Prisons

The Unconscious Meanings of Crime and Punishment

Martha Grace Duncan

"A complex book on the subject of incarceration that embraces both the actual experience of prisoners and the projection in literature of positive prison fantasies. Drawing on a very rich reservoir of illustrations, Duncan offers fascinating developments that will affect the readers' views on the timely question of crime and punishment."

—Victor Brombert, author of The Romantic Prison

0-8147-1880-9 / $29.95 cl

Eyes of Love

The Gaze in English and French Culture, 1840-1900

Stephen Kern

"As Kern argues in his provocative study Eyes of Love, *women pictured in Victorian art have suffered this living death at the hands not of artists, but of critics perpetuating one of art history's favoured clichés: the desiring male gaze. . . . A compelling picture of how the Victorians looked at themselves, and how we might look again at both their looks and our own."*

—Times Literary Supplement

125 illus. / 0-8147-4686-1 / $50.00 cl

Evil and the Demonic

A New Theory of Monstrous Behavior

Paul Oppenheimer

In this powerfully original work, Paul Oppenheimer proposes that evil can be understood empirically, as a type of physical and mental behavior that emerges in particular conditions.

32 illus. / 0-8147-6193-3 / $29.95 cl

Forthcoming in November

Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France

Richard Weisberg

with a Preface by Michael R. Marrus

"Tells an appalling and still contemporary story of the xenophobia of lawyers and of genocide and law. Weisberg has labored meticulously through archival and contemporary sources to document the lowest hour of the French legal profession. This is not only a monumental work of record but also an essay in interpretation of the failure of law."

—Peter Goodrich, Birkbeck College, University of London

0-8147-9302-9 / $45.00 cl

New York University Press

70 Washington Square South • New York, NY 10012

Available at better bookstores or call 1-800-996-6987

http://www.nyu.edu/pages/nyupress/index.html

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Few writers have explored the souls of Israelis with the clear, unsentimental vision that Oz brings..."

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

Amos Oz

Don't Call It Night

"A perfectly pitched comedy, expertly translated, and one of Oz's most attractive and accomplished books."

—KIRKUS REVIEWS

HARCOURT BRACE

Partisan Review
Published at Boston University
Printed in the U. S. A.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED